



The Rhodomentum

Nanaimo Rhododendron Society Newsletter



October 2020



President's Message

If you had the opportunity to attend our September meeting at the Nanaimo Community Gardens, then you know that it was not only educational but plain FUN! We should do it more often, weather permitting, of course.

Our congratulations go to Anne Davey and Val Harvey for both receiving a bronze medal from the NRS for their many years of devoted work to this club. Well-earned and deserved!

The announced September garden open houses at Jan and Liz' charming new garden, Rosina's at Departure Bay and Doug's in Parksville came and went. The next "Members Open Garden" will be on October 3rd from 2:00 to 5:00 at Chris Southwick's spectacular place. There will also be a plant sale with all proceeds going to the NRS. Can you contribute any plants for that sale? It would be much appreciated. Bring them to Chris' home at 6647 Green Acres Way.

The first Garden Tour video has been posted on YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/87qyWKZLvIE>. Have you seen it yet???

Instead of our regular October meeting, we will have a guided tour of Milner Gardens on Saturday, October 10th at 1:00pm.

Please reserve your spot with John at juneandjohn@shaw.ca

The next Hailey Grove work party with Bryan Jubinville will be on Tuesday, October 13th at the Bowen Park location. Bryan's crew made great progress so far, but more needs to be done. It is a great experience for all of us gardeners and we can look proudly back on the work we accomplished. Please join us on the 13th between 10am and 2pm. Bring your lunch too.

Our propagators are currently replanting the last of the rooted cuttings from 4x4" pots into 1-gallon pots. The soil mixture is 1/3 of each: peat moss, perlite and Western bark. Thank you to everyone who donated the 1-gallon pots, especially to Dorothee Kieser and Doug Kitts.

Wishing you much enjoyment in these lovely fall days we are blessed with and I hope to see you at the Milner Garden tour as well as Hailey Grove.

Rosina

OUR EXECUTIVE

President	Rosina Schmidt	751-3386
Vice President	Chris Southwick	390-3415
Past President	Allen McRae	758-7589
Secretary	Deborah Francis	
Treasurer	Ron Sutton	416 951-1373

Directors	Bryan Jubinville	668-2965
	Art Lightburn	468-7516
	Susan Lightburn	468-7516
	Gayle McRae	758-7589

COMMITTEES:

Advertising	Allen McRae
Library	Ann Beamish / Sandra Dorman
Newsletter	June Bouchard / John Deniseger
Membership	Jan Moles
Program	by Committee
Raffle	Ann Davey & Val Harvey
Social	vacant
Bargain Table	Reinhold Gorgosolich/Don Noakes
Website	Deborah Francis/Rosina Schmidt
Bus Tour	David & Joyce Mitchell
Sunshine	Ann Beamish
Propagation	Rosina Schmidt
Hailey Grove	Bryan Jubinville
Show and Sale	Jan Moles and Brenda Lewis

Nanaimo Rhododendron Society
Box 241, #101-5170 Dunster Road
Nanaimo, BC V9T 6M4

Website: nanaimorhodos.ca

email: rhodomentum@nanaimorhodos.ca

Next event: Saturday October 10th 1pm

Fall Colour Tour of Milner Gardens and Woodland

Lead by John and Chris

Due to COVID guidelines – please contact John to reserve a spot – space is limited

September 13th, 2020 - General Meeting Minutes (by Jan Moles):

Venue: Beban Park Community Gardens; Sunday, Sept. 13, 2020; 2pm.

Welcome: Dorothee Kieser welcomed us to the Community Gardens, explained that they were not individual gardens like allotments but truly shared gardens, and pointed out the excellent display of vegetables and flowers. It was an extremely comfortable place to have an outside meeting with lots of space for appropriate distancing and Dorothee indicated that it could be used for a meeting place again.

1. President's Report: Rosina Schmidt.

Rosina recorded the names of attendees (18 people) on arrival to the meeting for dual purpose: attendance list and COVID traceability. Chris Southwick (V.P) stepped in to chair the meeting to help with outside and smoky conditions.

Chris thanked the previous executive team for their great contributions to the club, and thanked June and John for their excellent work on the Rhodomentum newsletter. Congratulations were offered to Art and Susan for receiving the ARS Silver Medal, well deserved on many fronts including: their work with the club for many years; HUGE donation of rhodos to Milner gardens new 'Greig Rhododendron Species Garden'; Susan's outstanding photography which benefits our club, other clubs, and the ARS! We are delighted to have you in our midst.

2. The AGM – election and ratification of the Officers and Directors of the Society for 2020/2021: John Deniseger

Many of the posts were discussed prior to the meeting, invitations were extended to the meeting for further volunteers, and the new or incumbent officer/director voted in and accepted by the meeting. The resultant new club Officers, Directors and Committees are recorded here in Appendix I.



3. Treasurer's Report: Liz Higgins (outgoing)

Liz made a report from our last meeting on March 12th to September 13th, 2020.

For further details, a hard copy report was available.

The projected budget for the year 2020/2021 was presented, voted on and accepted unanimously.

Liz told us that our money for the hall at Beban for the "Covid months" had been refunded by Beban. We have cancelled the room for Sept & Oct, we still have a reservation if we need it for Nov, Dec but most clubs are not recommencing until the new year. If we should need the room, there will be limited numbers allowed in the space.

4. Secretary's Report: Jan Moles (outgoing)

No correspondence. Nothing to report. One question to the meeting: who looks after our club email address. It originally was looked after by Craig – but not sure who receives the contents now? Jan thinks maybe Gayle has access. To be checked.

5. Membership Report: Jan Moles

As of today, we have received 26 membership renewals, including those who have renewed this afternoon.

Susan Lightburn volunteered to send around a new request for renewals.

6. Program Committee Report: Art Lightburn

The program for this coming year is not really started. Discussions have taken place on how we can go forward this year with its unique conditions. Online meetings and presentations are being considered, as well as outdoor events and how we will manage them.

The calendar so far looks like:

Tuesday, September 15th, 10h to 14h: work party at Hailey Rhododendron Grove in Bowen park. Use the parking lot besides the tennis courts. Bring your tools if you wish and your lunch. Bryan Jubinville will be there when the city brings the additional tools.

Wednesday, 16th of September, 15h to 17h: Garden Open House at Jan and Liz's garden **7122 Dickinson Road in Lantzville;**

As well as Rosina's garden at **3196 Merry Men Way (West of Departure Bay School), in Nanaimo.**

Thursday, 17th of September: Executive meeting at the gardens of Rea and Ron Sutton at 7310 Cougar Smith Rd., Fanny Bay, at 2:00pm.

John Deniseger proposed a guided tour of Milner and the Greig Rhodo Species Garden led by John and Chris. It was unanimously agreed to be a great idea. John to discuss the potential and the logistics with Geoff Ball.

Milner Gardens have extended the membership to cover the time for which they were closed. This will take most members at least to the end of the year. The entrance kiosk has all the details of your membership and the end dates. (David Mitchell)

There will be another **open garden on 3rd October at Chris Southwick's**, details to follow later.

7. Propagation Committee Report: Rosina Schmidt

The cuttings have been repotted into larger pots. Don Noakes' collection have now been shared with other keepers: Chris and Bryan. Rosina and Deborah are also looking after cuttings.

The team will be repotting into 1-gallon pots shortly: **donations of one-gallon pots gratefully received, please drop at Rosina's or Chris's – 2 gal pots would also be welcome.**

Next propagation session will be happening soon. Alan & Liz Murray have very kindly offered to have it at their place, to provide cuttings of Jim Barlup's hybrids and knowledge and assistance in the propagation 2020 effort. This wonderful offer is gratefully accepted. Date in mid-October to be announced.

8. Hailey Rhodo Grove Report: Bryan Jubinville

Bryan unable to attend the meeting. The Hailey Grove effort is coming along, but we definitely need more volunteers. Next work bee is scheduled for Tuesday, September 15th at 10am to 2pm, see details in Calendar above.

Susan to send out message to all.

9. Advertising Report: Allen McRae

Allen unable to attend the meeting.

10. Presentation of the Medals: Chris Southwick

Bronze Medals were presented to Ann Davey and Val Harvey in thanks for and recognition of their many years of service to the club. **The meeting gave them a standing ovation!**

11. Today's topic: 'Highlights of your garden this year'

A round table encouraged each person to tell us about the highlight of their gardening year in their own garden.

Meeting closed: everyone very much enjoyed being in the Community Gardens. Thank you, Dorothee!

Next Exec Meeting: Thursday 17th September at Rea & Ron Sutton's garden in Fanny Bay.

Next General Meeting/Activity: to be announced.

Appendix I: Officers, Directors and Committees of the Club 2020/2021

President: Rosina Schmidt

Vice President: Chris Southwick

Secretary: Deborah Francis

Treasurer: Ron Sutton

Past President: Allen McRae

Directors: Bryan Jubinville, Art Lightburn, Susan Lightburn, Gaylle McRae

Committees:

Advertising: Allen McRae

Library: Ann Beamish/Sandra Dorman

Newsletter: June Bouchard/ John Deniseger

Membership: Jan Moles

Program Committee: Art Lightburn (chair), Dorothee Kieser, Glenda Barr, John Deniseger, Chris Southwick

Raffle: Ann Davey/Val Harvey

Social: tba

Bargain Table: Rheinhold Gorgosolich

Website: Deborah Francis/Rosina Schmidt

Bus Tour: David & Joyce Mitchell

Sunshine: Ann Beamish

Propagation: Rosina Schmidt (chair), Deborah Francis, Bryan Jubinville, Al & Liz Murray, Liz Higgins, Jan Moles, Chris Southwick, Dorothee Kieser.

Hailey Grove: Bryan Jubinville (chair)

Show & Sale: Jan Moles (Show), Brenda Lewis (Sale)

Congratulations to Val Harvey and Ann Davey for their Bronze Medals!

At our September meeting at the Nanaimo Community Gardens, Val Harvey and Ann Davey received well deserved Bronze Medals from our club in recognition of their long-term contributions. They have both been important NRS members for a long time! Congratulations!!!!



Fall Colour Tour of Milner Gardens and Woodland

Saturday, October 10th at 1pm

While COVID 19 won't allow us to have our usual meetings at Beban, we've organized an alternative event for NRS members. Milner Gardens and Woodland offers us an opportunity to get together while enjoying some of the most beautiful fall colours in our area. Chris Southwick and John Denisegeer will lead us on a tour of Milner, including the Greig Rhododendron Species Garden. If you'd like to join us, you must pre-register by contacting John at juneandjohn@shaw.ca. The group is limited to 20 people – we've now started a waiting list. There will be an admission fee of \$5 per person for non-Milner members.

COVID 19 protocols will apply of course: hand sanitizer will be available, **please bring your mask** as they are strongly recommended in conjunction with social distancing. We will be splitting the group into 2 smaller groups while on site as that is more practical for both COVID 19 and for visiting the garden. A reminder that the gift shop and tea room will not be open.

We'll be meeting at 1pm at the Welcome Center as you enter Milner. If the weather doesn't cooperate, we'll postpone to Saturday, October 17th.



Hope to see many of you there!

NRS Executive Meeting at Rea and Ron Sutton's home in Fanny Bay - September 17th, 2020



Left to right:
Ron the host,
Art, Susan,
Doug (not on
executive
team),
Deborah, Chris.
Rosina took the
photo.

More Fall Open Gardens - Saturday, October 3rd!

The NRS will be organizing some **open gardens**, starting this fall! We are missing our gardening friends and want to see what new or interesting plants or projects members have. The first Open Gardens were on Wednesday, September 16th from 3 to 5 at Jan Moles and Liz Higgins's and Rosina Schmidt's. Unfortunately, the smoky skies hindered attendance.

Now that the smoke has cleared and we've had some needed rain, our next Open Garden will be on **Saturday, October 3rd** from 2 to 5 at Chris Southwick's place at 6647 Green Acres Way. There will also be a plant sale with all proceeds going to the NRS. Any plant donations are appreciated.



Bearing in mind COVID 19, each garden will have an entry point and an exit point, with directions around the garden for everyone to follow, so there is no overlap, to keep folks properly socially distanced. Hand sanitizer will be provided. We hope to have several gardens open at the same time. If there are too many cars at one spot, stay in your car until someone leaves. The owner(s) will control how many people are in the garden at one time. Appropriate safety rules will be strictly followed to ensure everyone is safe. If you are feeling ill, or someone in your bubble is ill, if you have been asked to self-isolate because of a possible contact with someone with Covid-19, please stay home. No food or drink will be served, nor will you be able to use their facilities.

We are looking for more gardens, so if you are interested in opening yours to NRS members, please let organizer Chris Southwick know.

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Our deepest sympathy to Val Harvey who recently lost her husband, Glyn. Our thoughts are with her and her family...



Heard in Passing...

- We could sure use more help for these work bees!
- It's been so nice to see everyone again!
- No more irrigating and hand watering until next year.
- Fall colour is really starting to kick in!
- I miss summer already!
- Soon it'll be time to start mulching.
- The asters, chrysanthemums and sedums are looking beautiful!
- A few slightly confused rhodos are starting to bloom...





With all the upheaval due to the current situation, we have been remiss in officially welcoming members who have joined our club over the past year:
Jessica Gemella, Christine Quist, Scott Nicol, Mary & Mike O'Neill, Leigh Murray, and Sabina and Robert Reey
A warm welcome to all!
Hope to see you at various events in the coming months!

What's on the Calendar

Despite Covid19, there are things to do, places to go, events, and work bees... As part of the new normal, all of the usual protocols apply e.g. social distancing, hand sanitizers etc. There will also be some on-line events coming this fall – stay tuned!

- Milner Gardens and Woodland Fall Colour Tour – Saturday October 10th
- Greig Rhododendron Species Garden at Milner – work bee October 16th 9 am
- Hailey Grove at Bowen Park – monthly work bees – **see details on page 8.**
- Milner Gardens and Woodland – fall hours Thursday to Saturday 11 to 4pm.
Check their website for details; <https://www2.viu.ca/milnergardens/events.asp>
Currently only gardens and trails are open.
- NRS members-only fall garden open houses – **see p. 6 for full details.**
- NRS Zoom-based education classes and seminars – watch for details in future newsletters.
- NRS members-only spring garden open houses – details to follow.
- District 1 online speaker series using Zoom – details to follow.



Stay connected - check our web page regularly!

<http://nanaimorhodos.ca/>

An Update from our Propagation Group

Our propagation group has been busy, following up on last fall's cuttings that began at VIU's Paine Center. Here they are about a year later, recently transplanted into 1-gallon pots containing a mixture of equal parts, peat moss, perlite and bark. Soon, more cuttings will be taken. Al and Liz Murray in Cobble Hill have generously offered their propagation facility for our next batch of cuttings – thank you Al and Liz!



Here are some of them in Rosina's garden ~



Healthy cuttings at Chris's....



Bryan has nearly 200 of them!!!

Hailey Rhododendron Grove at Bowen Park

Through the spring, NRS volunteers held a couple of work bees to begin the clean up of the Hailey Rhododendron Grove at Bowen Park. Working with Nanaimo Parks and Recreation staff, and following COVID 19 protocols, work bees will continue through the fall. **Monthly work bees are planned for the following Tuesdays from 10 am to 2 pm: October 13th, November 17th, and December 15th. Hope you can join us!!**

Check the article on the following pages to learn about the history of the Hailey Grove at Bowen Park.



Hailey Garden

by Sandra Evelyn

[reprint from May 1994 issue of NRS newsletter]

In April, 1975, Mrs. Ellen Hailey gave more than 350 rhododendron plants from her collection to the City of Nanaimo. These plants can be found in the Hailey Rhododendron Garden in Bowen Park.

When I was asked to write a history of this lovely old garden I accepted but not without a good deal of trepidation. Certainly I was familiar with this garden; in fact my husband and I frequently visit the Hailey Garden in Bowen Park and now find ourselves on a first name basis with many of its occupants. Each spring we look forward to renewing our acquaintance with the Rhododendron hybrids such as 'Etta Burrows', 'Snow Queen', 'Avalanche', 'Mrs. Chas. E. Pearson'; and some species including *R. calophytum*, *R. conncinum*. There are also the many Azaleas such as *R. slippenbachii*. But a large number of these rhododendron plants seem unable to be identified. One must be content to enjoy their beauty and (if they feel so stimulated) to engage in the conjecture of the parentage of these progeny. Over the last decade many Vancouver Island rhodo-dendron experts including Bill Dale, Norman Todd, Evelyn and Nick Weesjes, Dave Dougan, Bob and Jean Rhodes and Ken Gibson have visited the garden and concur that many of the rhododendrons in the Hailey garden noticeably differ from the many hybrid and species rhododendrons they are familiar with. These unknown crosses may well be one of a kind. It seems unlikely even if modern genetic research makes these elusive plants reveal their parentage many will be recognized as registered hybrids. Along with the overall beauty of the plants in the garden this mystery of the unknown becomes part of the lure of the Hailey Garden to everyday passers by and rhodoholics alike.

But a garden's history is not only about nomenclature and botanical origins. It is also about special integrated relationships between the plants and the people who select and care for these plants. The rhododendrons in the Hailey Garden have known two owners. The garden was originally established in Vancouver and later moved to Vancouver Island by Captain Alfred and Mrs. Ellen Hailey. Today it is owned by the people of the City of Nanaimo.

As both Captain and Mrs. Hailey are now deceased and left no written records of their garden I knew it would be difficult to write of this earlier history. However, memories of those who knew the Haileys in Vancouver such as long time rhodoholic Fred Collins, along with Jean Rhodes' knowledge of items in older ARS journals and Nanaimo historian Fred Taylor's records of Bowen Park have all helped to piece together some of the story behind the Hailey Rhododendron Garden.

The first Hailey garden was located at their residence in Vancouver at 14th Avenue and Dunbar St. Here, Captain Hailey indulged his interest in arborea and had a collection of locally available magnolias. Ellen Hailey was a lab technician who worked for a medical practitioner in the Fraser Valley who had a keen interest in rhododendrons. His hobby proved addictive (who once exposed can dare to deny this?) and Mrs. Hailey was soon observed removing the grass about her home to make way for her own increasing rhododendron collection. Indeed she soon had several hundred rhodos on this city sized lot including both hybrids and species. Many of these plants were obtained by Mrs. Hailey during her frequent "shopping trips" to Halfdan Lem's nursery in the United States. To-day some of his famous hybrids which include *R. 'Lem's Monarch'* (a.k.a. Pink Walloper) can be seen in the Hailey Rhododendron Garden in Bowen Park.

Halfdan Lem was a 6' plus Norwegian with a great sense of humour. If he liked a woman he pinched her bottom and not everyone was so honoured. Any cross that had a calyx was called a "Toodle-oo" and the big ones were all "Wallopers". This has caused a lot of confusion and other people have tried to straighten it out by naming and registering individual clones. When you purchased plants, you were also given more and the car groaned under the weight as we sailed through the Border -- no restrictions in those days.

Lester Brandt was a very intelligent man and a scholar and his plants reflected his background. His unnamed treasures were kept in separate greenhouses where the public could not see them. That did not stop Ellen. She knew a good plant when she saw one, and Lester reluctantly parted with a beauty. I suspect he had a backup. He was tragically murdered during a robbery by young hoodlums.

Hjalmer Larson lived close by and we always found room for a few more rhodies -- many of them gifts. Plants from these three sources may not have been registered at the time but many were later.

There were, of course shorter excursions to local suppliers but most of the nurseries were still specializing in the Dutch hybrids which at that time were grafted on to *R. ponticum* (azaleas were on *R. luteum*). Rooted cuttings and tissue culture came later.

Len Living, together with Ellen and me were Charter members of the Vancouver Chapter and Len knew that we were looking for some of the newer English hybrids so he imported them. The Naomi and Loderi crosses then became available in very limited numbers. Ellen wanted them all. Another local specialist was Hyland Barnes, a retired banker. We often drove to Mission to visit her old friend Dr. McKee for whom she worked as a lab technician for many years. Dr. McKee also had property at Abbotsford where he had a collection of rhododendrons, including large specimens of *R. decorum*. He did not personally hybridize but left this sexy job to the birds and bees and collected the seed pods when they were ripe. At least the decorum parent was known and many beautiful plants were shared. He even named one 'Ellen Hailey' but it was never registered or even tagged to my knowledge. After his death, his daughter, Mrs. Selby took over.

Another source was the Greigs, especially for species. Ted would often sell us the stock plant to the chagrin of Mary (that is how I obtained the original *R. augustinii* 'Royston'). However, she knew that she could always take cuttings whenever she wanted.

Greigs of course specialized in rhododendron species and only tried their hand at hybridizing on a limited basis. Ellen often obtained plants from Greigs that were unnamed but later registered. One of Mary's favourites was a plant that had the colours of a Queen Ann Cherry and she named it 'Queen Anne' but it could not be registered because the name was already in the registry.

Like all people who collect rhododendrons, we could always find room for one more plant and because we were dealing with young plants fresh out of the nurseries, we did not take their eventual size into consideration. At the time of the Hailey's move to Hammond Bay, none of her rhododendrons were too large to be moved (not for her, anyway).

There can be no doubt that Mrs. Hailey's interest in rhododendrons went beyond that of finding a suitable garden plant for "beside the front door". She was a charter member of the Vancouver Rhododendron Society which formed in the early 1950's. From 1959 through 1962 she was secretary-treasurer of the group. In April 1963 she undertook to chair a committee for a display of rhododendrons in the Vancouver Horticultural Society show. Frequently she was called upon to judge at rhododendron shows.

By now "rhododendroning" had become a family affair in the Hailey household. The early meetings of the Vancouver Chapter of the ARS were held in members' homes and gardens. Captain and Mrs. Haileys' three children, a daughter and two sons were always on hand to greet the guest members and serve refreshments. For whatever their reasons these children did not retain an interest in their parents' garden and the City of Nanaimo became the welcoming beneficiary to many of the rhododendrons.

The second Hailey Rhododendron Garden was planted in Nanaimo in 1967. Captain Hailey had accepted a post in Nanaimo as port warden and the family moved to their new home in the Hammond Bay area just past the lagoon. Not about to leave her beloved rhododendrons behind Mrs. Hailey had a backhoe load them onto two forty foot flatbed trucks and transported to Nanaimo. Here they flourished in a garden that was soon to become vastly overgrown as the family engaged in other interests including a summer home on Thormanby Island. With failing health Mrs. Hailey may have been expressing her concern for her plants' survival when she asked local rhododendron growers to propagate some of her prized species plants but this was never accomplished.

On March 21st, 1975 Captain Hailey was returning in his small pleasure craft from a short holiday to the family summer cabin. Despite his lifelong experience with the sea (his transport carrier was torpedoed off South Africa and he and another Nanaimo man, Capt. Clarke spent several hours in shark infested waters before rescue) Captain Hailey's craft overturned. Although he had lashed himself to the transom Captain Hailey was unable to withstand the cold waters and he died from exposure. Mrs. Hailey found she could no longer keep her home and garden and decided to move back to Vancouver to be closer to family and friends. Once again she faced a priority of establishing a new home for her many rhododendrons. She gave her species collection to the Vancouver Parks Board where Alleyne Cook undertook to arrange their planting in Van Dusen Gardens. The hybrids numbering some 350 plants she gave to the Nanaimo Parks Board. It is interesting to note, however, that some species did find their way into the Bowen Park Hailey Garden. In April, 1975 the planting of these rhododendrons in Bowen Park was overseen by city gardener Anders Olsen in what was to be the third and final Hailey Rhododendron Garden. Unfortunately the plants were either not tagged or the tags were lost and no records were kept of the identity of the individual plants.

Until recently the Hailey Rhododendron Garden in Bowen Park has not received the attention it so richly deserves. Lack of funding and manpower saw the plants grow to overcrowd each other. It became obvious that many of the plants had been propagated by graft as suckering rootstock (mainly *R. ponticum*) began to overpower the scions. This suggests there are some rare and hard to propagate specialties in the collection. *R. 'Susan'* and *R. 'Robin Hood'* are two

such specimens that have been identified. Vandalism, too, took its toll. Some plants have been found uprooted and others mysteriously disappeared. However with the installation of a watering system and a dense mulching of sawdust most of the rhodos survived happily enough. Today many of these plants have reached a height of fifteen feet or more.

In 1992 the Nanaimo Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society was established and the membership was encouraged to visit and enjoy the Hailey Gardens. In June, 1993 eight of the founding members formed a work party and volunteered to "dead-head" (remove the spent blooms) of the plants. Interest mounted within the group and it was proposed that Bowen Park including the Hailey Garden could be used as the NRS principal display garden. A comprehensive plan was worked on by the executive of the NRS and the City of Nanaimo whereby the NRS asked to "adopt" the rhododendron grove in Bowen Park as part of the city's "Volunteers In Parks" program. With this permission granted in winter of 1994 the NRS voted to provide the sum of \$1500. for the purpose upgrading and expanding the irrigation system. This sum will be matched by an equal amount from a city grant. Present plans include extending the watering system, plant identification and tagging, improvements to pathways and general maintenance. In future, they also hope to provide for additional plantings.

The Hailey Rhododendron Garden lies in the beautiful Millstream River valley in Bowen Park. It can be reached by three access routes. One may start from the Bush Street parking lot and covered picnic area. From here follow the roadway that runs adjacent to the Millstream River. A smaller parking lot to accommodate about six cars is located halfway between the Bush Street lot and the Hailey Garden. A sign "The Hailey Rhododendron Garden" is on the left-hand side. If you approach from the upper valley proceed downstream past the animal farmyard. Alternatively, leave the parking lot behind the tennis courts on Bowen Road and adjacent to the Bowen Park Clubhouse and follow a woodland trail that descends into the garden. Of course if you should choose (and you most definitely should) to time your visit to these gardens during April and May the colourful, towering and sometimes scented trusses announce you have arrived at the Hailey Rhododendron Garden.

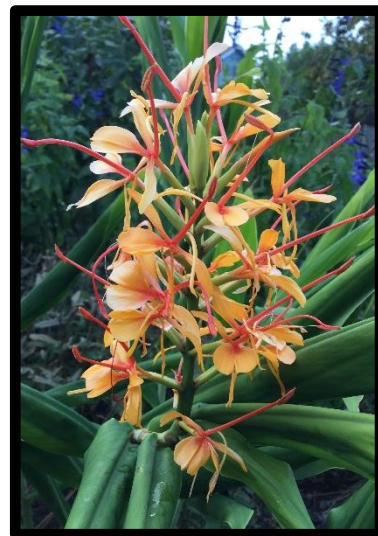
WANTED!!!!

Our great propagators will soon transplant the rhodo cuttings into larger pots. They would appreciate any 1- and 2-gallon pots that you don't need – please drop them off at Rosina's or Chris's or bring them to one of our upcoming events.

Gardening - from Alabama to Nanaimo by Jon Smith

A lot of our gardening in Nanaimo has involved testing to see how much of what we grew in our Birmingham, Alabama, garden could succeed here. Birmingham and Nanaimo both nominally inhabit USDA Zone 8, but the climates are obviously quite different; Birmingham gardeners talk of “Texas summers and English winters,” but Nanaimo gardeners have only the latter. The gentle coastal summers then enable us to grow rhodos so well also mean that a number of subtropical-ish plants that overwinter fine in Birmingham (cannas and brugmansia, for example) can’t store enough energy to do the same here on the Island—for now.

The most fragrant flower in anybody’s southern garden is *Hedychium coronarium*, butterfly ginger. The aroma of its white, two-inch blossoms is, as the author of *Garden Bulbs for the South* puts it, “sweet and intense, yet always refreshing.” Native to India, it’s also used in leis in Hawaii. We haven’t seen it in the trade here, but we did find *H. coccineum*, its orange-flowered Himalayan cousin, which bloomed for us in its third year after a hot week this past August. A variegated *Hedychium* we planted last year didn’t survive the winter. We’re told you can lift and store *Hedychiums*—known as ginger lilies in the south and members of the ginger family, Zingiber—in areas where the ground freezes, so if we ever find some *H. coronarium*, we may try that.



Another popular bulb “down south” is *Lycoris radiata*, the red spider lily, a native of Japan that in the deep south tends to naturalize in people’s lawns. *Lycoris* are weird: they put out grass- or narcissus-like foliage in the spring, then die back with the daffodils, then suddenly shoot up flower stalks seemingly out of nowhere in mid- or late summer.

Pictured here is *Lycoris squamigera*, the surprise lily, which gets its name for

just that reason. In fact, a folksy name for *Lycoris* is “naked ladies”; in the picture, the clothing foliage is from a nearby daylily. This is also the first time it bloomed for us. In the south, most of the half dozen *Lycoris* garden species bloom “sometime after the Fourth of July”; here, it’s mid-September.

Both these plants might make lovely companions for rhodos (the bold texture of *Hedychium* foliage is especially striking), always keeping in mind that this far north they need as much sun as they can get!

(Editors note: Some of you may remember Jon talking about *Hedychium coccineum* as part of our “Highlights of your garden” discussion at our September meeting. Thanks for following up, Jon!)



The Greig Rhododendron Species Garden - Work bee October 16th



Now that the species garden has been weeded and we've had some much-needed rain, it's time to change gears. We have companion plants to get into the ground and lots of arborist mulch to spread. **We're planning a major work bee for Friday, October 16th from 9am to mid afternoon.** All Vancouver Island Chapters are invited to participate, enjoy the garden that we've helped establish and prepare it for winter, while spending time with other avid gardeners. As always, COVID 19 protocols will be in place for all activities. If you would like to join us, please let John know at juneandjohn@shaw.ca

What to bring: appropriate clothing, glove and footwear and don't forget your lunch. If you have a favourite rake or pitch fork that you'd like to bring, that would be great. Otherwise, sanitized tools will be provided.

Time spent in a beautiful garden with friends - PERFECT!

Postponed to 2021

Fall into Gardening will be Back – hopefully in 2021

In October 2018, the Nanaimo and Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Societies co-hosted a very successful one day fall gardening workshop in Parksville. The event was called "Fall into Gardening" and had the theme of "Navigating Garden Myths". For 2020, the organizing committee had worked hard putting together a special day for the gardeners of central Vancouver Island – with the theme "Gardening from the Ground Up". The NRS and MARS had also added a new partner: the Vancouver Island Master Gardeners Association

Of course, we are living in uncertain times, resulting in the cancellation of this year's event. Actually, it's more of a postponement, as each of our speakers has agreed to come next year. The program includes Linda Chalker-Scott, Richard Hebda, Shannon Berch and Scott Wiskerke. **We plan on holding it on Sunday, October 24th, 2021 at the Parksville Community and Conference Center.**

Let's hope that we will be able to go ahead!

"Delicious autumn! My very soul is wedded to it, and if I were a bird, I would fly about the Earth seeking the successive autumns."

George Eliot



Explore the mountains of China from your couch.

The 2019 Expedition to China – A Zoom Talk by Steve Hootman

When: Thursday, October 8th from 5-6:30pm.

Where: Participate from the comfort of your home!

Cost: US\$10 for Current Members, US\$20 for non-Members

Join Steve Hootman for a Zoom lecture featuring his latest expedition to China. Steve will take you to the mountains of south Yunnan and adjacent Guangxi with images and details about the plants seen during his fall 2019 expedition. This trip is another in a series designed to explore the regions away from the main center of distribution of the genus *Rhododendron* in an effort to fill in the gaps in our knowledge and to introduce new taxa into cultivation.

Highlights include the first botanical exploration of a rhododendron-covered mountain on the Vietnam border, as well as several days in some of the finest remaining old-growth forests in China. Steve will also discuss and illustrate new findings and theories about subsection *Fortunea*, including several new, enigmatic, and even unknown species and their relationship to each other.

As always, this will be an entertaining and educational lecture and discussion with beautiful images from some of the most remote and least explored regions of China. The talk will be followed by a moderated Q&A.

[Buy Tickets here](#)

**IT'S TIME TO
RENEW YOUR
MEMBERSHIP!**

Membership fees are due!

This is the time of the year when our annual memberships are up for renewal! You can pay your fees either electronically or by cheque – single \$40.00; couple \$45.00; payable at the beginning of September.

- By cheque: send per post to: Liz Higgins, Box 442, Nanaimo, BC, V0R 2H0; or bring your cheque to the meeting on September 13th.
- Electronically: e-transfer to lizhiggins24@gmail.com (tel.#: 250-390-9340)

In each case please specify if for a single membership, family membership or associate.
Thank you, and happy gardening!



*Happy Thanksgiving
everyone! ☺*