



SEPTEMBER 2003

Welcome back to another enjoyable and educational Rhodo Year.

Volume 12



Issue 1

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcome all to a new Rhododendron Society season. Last season was most successful, culminating with our great annual BBQ at the home of Joyce and Craig, thanks to you both.

The 'Wet Coast' Bus Trip to Stubb's Island, Ken Gibson's, Urban Greenery, Dashwood and Ucluelet was slightly damp, but never the less, a wonderful experience. Next year we will be going south.

September is the month to start the process of hardening off your rhododendrons. With next season's flower buds forming, now it is imperative that you stop fertilizing and start to reduce the amount of water you are applying. If you are just keeping up with your watering then continue into October. Now is a good time to review your garden and determine if you should move that rhododendron which has become too large for the space provided. Do some need more sun, shade, wetter or dryer area? Plan now to move this November and use all that great compost you made over the summer.

Our Malaspina College Bursary went to first year horticultural student Polly Samland, who has thanked us for our assistance.

See you all at the meeting. Bring friends and relatives to the meeting, the more the merrier.

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	VOLUNTEER NEEDED	
NEWSLETTER	Paul & Linda	390-2370
PROGRAMS	VOLUNTEER NEEDED	
RAFFLE TABLE	June & John	
SOCIAL	Anne	390-2604
\$ TABLE	Yvonne	756-3574

MEETINGS

September 11 - Beban Park at 7 P.M.

Eleanor Dempster

From Rivers to Mountains

"How 500 Rhodos Took a Walk"

October 9 - Trevor & Doreen Badminton

November 13 - Garth Wedemeyer

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1

HELP OUT THE ENVIRONMENT & SAVE MONEY FOR
THE SOCIETY BY:
BRINGING YOUR OWN CUP TO MEETINGS.



check all nooks and crannies for NRS Library books.
please bring to the September Meeting.

NRS MAILING ADDRESS

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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

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DISTRIBUTION

Gill Taylor

September Garden Calendar

As annuals finish, replace them with hardy winter items: Pansies, Wallflowers, flowering Kale, Cabbage and Mums.

Spring flowering bulbs can be planted now but dust them with Bulb Dust and plant in groups for the best effect. Plant Colchicums or Fall Crocus for colour.

Stop watering your Tuberous Begonias – let them dry up naturally. Plant Fall & Rye grass in the harvested areas of your garden for valuable green manure.

Fall Weed & Feed is great to prepare your lawn

An easy way to assist the Society in raising funds is to bring extra or unwanted plants to the Rhodo Meeting .

They can be auctioned or sold at the dollar table.



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287-4301

Pwurz@oberon.ark.com

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Hunting for early Bloomers?

R. mucronulatum - this is a deciduous variety that will grow about four feet in ten years. The January or February flowers are a bright rosy-purple.

Praecox - attractive rosy-purple flowers appear on this evergreen variety in February and March. It grows about three feet high in ten years.

Bric-a-brac - showy white flowers generally appear in March. Expect it to grow to a height of about two feet in ten years.

PJM - Flowers are bright lavender pink. Expect it to grow about four feet in ten years. Flowers in March or a little earlier, some years.

Cilpinense - flowers are light pink at first, fading to white. Blooms in late February or early March. Protect early flowers from frost. Nice bushy habit of growth to about 30 inches in ten years.

Rosamundi and Christmas Cheer - two excellent large leafed varieties. Early flowering, generally in late February or early March. Flowers pink to white on both varieties. Christmas Cheer grows to about 3 feet in ten years and Rosamunda just a little taller.

Blue Diamond - attractive violet-blue flowers cover this bushy plant in early April. It grows about three feet in ten years.

Conemaugh - frilly lavender-pink, bell shaped flowers in late March. Height is about three feet in ten years.

Brocade (pink); **Tessa** (rosy-lilac); **R. lutescens** (yellow) and **R. moupinense** (soft pink) are just a few of the others.

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Slug Control

by Doug Green of Simple Gifts Farm

My garden has been a bit sluggish lately, particularly the Hosta, so I thought I'd focus on these members of the mollusk family and try to speed things up a bit. Slugs and snails, the topic of the column are actually related to clams and oysters, not garden insects and you might keep that in mind the next time you go out to the garden looking for a light lunch.

You might also be interested in knowing that slugs don't come in the basic male and female pattern commonly found in nature. Slugs are hermaphrodites, having both female and male sexual organs so they don't need a mate to lay their egg masses of up to 100 eggs. (Sounds boring to me but then I'm not a slug.) These large eggs, often 1/4 inch long, are white and stay around until moisture causes them to hatch.

Moisture is the key to slug survival, they avoid the sun by spending their days happily hiding in cool, damp, dark places such as under the mulch layer, under boards, rocks and even burrowing deeper into the soil. However, once night begins, so does their predatory wanderings. They move by secreting a mucous layer and then glide over this trail; this by the way is the number one clue to their existence on your plant. This dried up trail of mucous can be seen if the eaten leaf is closely examined.

The easiest way to control slugs is to remove all old boards, bricks, garden clippings etc. from the garden to remove their hiding places. If you mulch your garden, use a mulch that slugs do not like such as shredded bark, or crushed rock. Thin out ground covers such as ivy (if the winter hasn't done that for you) because slugs simply adore ivy ground covers.

If slug predators are encouraged, the slug population will be largely controlled naturally. Snakes, toads, frogs, birds, beetles, and fireflies all munch down these pests quite happily so if you encourage their presence, you'll reduce your slug population. A bit of water in the backyard for frogs, providing hiding places for toads, (clay flower pots turned on their side and half buried are perfect homes for toads) and reducing the indiscriminate use of pesticides (ensuring more predatory beetles survive to eat slugs) are all simple garden practices that will reduce slug populations.

Humans are the number one predator of slugs though and once again, the hand of the gardener is the most effective control agent. Rototill the garden, doing this physically kills the slugs as well as reducing their hiding places to dust. Lay decoy trap boards out in the garden and lift them up every morning; kill the slugs and snails you find under the board. Handpick them off your plants on a warm, humid night. If you are a bit squeamish about hand picking slugs, you might try taping an old fork to a stick and using this to knock the slugs into a pail of soapy water. Just don't use one of the good company-forks. I'm told a shop vac also works well for sucking slugs up, I'd like a report on this if you try it.

A bowl of beer buried to the lip in the soil is an oft recommended control practice. Apparently the slugs are attracted to the fermenting yeast smell. So this tells me you could use yeast as well as beer. I've heard mixed reports from this, saying that the dog drank the beer, leaving a happy dog but frustrated slugs. and at the other extreme – having lots of very happy slugs. You'll have to try it out yourself as I've never done this.

Barriers work well. Wood ashes, diatomaceous earth, cedar bark, cinders and continuous copper strips can be effective barriers to slug travel. Copper barriers apparently interact with the slug to produce a mild electrical shock. Bury a 6" wide copper screen or strip four inches into the ground leaving two inches protruding above ground for best results. Make sure there are no vegetation bridges over the barrier that the slugs can use to circumvent your copper moat. If slugs are inside the barrier, they'll be unable to get out so you'll have to continue your control methods to eliminate these prisoners. Ashes and diatomaceous earth are only effective when they are dry. I've also heard some gardeners use salt on the slugs. While this may not make them taste better, it does kill them; however, repeated applications of salt will poison your garden soil.

Poison slug baits are sold in many garden centres, These are poisonous also to dogs, cats and small children so if used, please use them with extreme caution. With all the other control methods available, poison should be the choice of last resort. If you are bothered by slugs and snails, the least toxic methods do work. You may have to combine several different methods to achieve good, consistent control but like all things in the garden there are balances. If you want toads and frogs to cheer your summer evening they must be fed. If living with a bit of plant damage is necessary to keep our other garden friends happy, well so be it.

By reducing your dependence on chemical controls, and increasing your hands-on techniques, slug control will remain effective and you, your children, pets and other garden inhabitants will live safer, healthier lives. Isn't that what gardening is all about anyway?

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WOODLAND JEWELS: RHODODENDRONS

By Halil Ibrahim Tutak

A beautiful scent filled the air, but to which plant it belonged I had no idea. I had often experienced the scent of thyme in the mountains during spring, but never perfumed mountains in this way. The scent turned out to come from the yellow flowers of a species of rhododendron, known in Turkish as forest roses. These bushes with their large flowers could be seen sometimes in small groups and sometimes covering the ground as far as I could see. I was reminded of these lines by the poet Orhan Veli: 'This world drives one mad / This tree beflowered from top to toe'. In a sea of yellow and purple flowers, happiness is indeed close to madness. Five species of rhododendron grow wild in Turkey. My passion for these lovely flowers began by coincidence. I had always visited the Black Sea region during the summer months, and so had never seen the rhododendrons in bloom. Yet at the end of August one-year, I noticed a single flower that for some reason had bloomed out of season.

The rhododendron becomes more common the further eastward one goes, growing in forests and forests glades in the Black Sea Mountains. The first flowers appear in early May and continue until the end of June, or until mid-July at higher altitudes such as in the Kackar Mountains.

In the western Black Sea region, Rhododendron ponticum with its purple flowers are more common. Despite their beauty, they are not well liked by forestry authorities, because these sturdy evergreen bushes are surface rooting, and so spread rapidly, forming impenetrable thickets and impeding forest growth by preventing the seeds of trees from taking root. That is why, in some areas rhododendrons are cleared to encourage young trees to gain a foothold. The woody branches of the purple rhododendron are widely used for firewood by local people.

Not only foresters but honey producers look on rhododendron as a pest rather than an asset. This is because the flowers contain certain toxins, with the result that honey produced by bees, which have visited these flowers, is poisonous, and is only used by some herbalists as an ingredient of medicines. Such local names as kara asu (dark poison) and komar, and the yellow species (Rhododendron luteum) know the purple rhododendron as sari asu (yellow poison) or zifin. The latter is more poisonous than other species, and local people take care that their animals do not graze on the grass beneath these bushes, particularly after it has rained.

One misty late afternoon when I was returning from the alpine pasture of Kulakkaya in Giresun, I stopped to chat with a shepherd, Ali Kemal, and while talking noticed a flower of a different colour amongst the blooms of the yellow rhododendron. He explained that this reddish orange coloured flower was a different type of rhododendron which grew nowhere else but here.

Then last year I was astonished to see that a group of yellow rhododendrons in a different part of the same pasture had produced orange blooms. Now I am waiting with anticipation to see whether this colour change takes place in any of the other patches of dark yellow rhododendrons in this area. Unlike the evergreen purple rhododendron, the yellow rhododendron is deciduous, but in the course of losing its leaves for the winter produces a show as beautiful as its blooms in spring. The leaves turn first yellow, then red and finally brown, creating a riot of autumn colour similar to that of beech trees. So it is not only in spring that these rhododendrons ornament the forested mountains of the Black Sea to such spectacular effect.

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Dear Paul & Linda:

I just wanted to let you know that my WEBSITE is finally up and on the web world! If any of your members would like to read any or all of my articles and see other information, they are welcome to go have a look! It can be seen at:

<http://www3.sympatico.ca/moorelandscaping>

It is still under construction - but you will notice there is a link to the Nanaimo Rhodo Site as well!

Thanks again,

WE NEED YOUR INPUT. WHAT OR WHOM WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE/HEAR AT FUTURE MEETINGS.?

Horticulture Tip
(Seattle Rhododendronland - December 1999)

Are your rhodies looking a bit chlorotic? (green veins with yellow leaves).

While visiting Jim Barlup's garden recently, he shared his success recipe Jim uses a combination:

Epsom salts(2tbs per gallon of water)

Chelated iron (per instructions on the box)

Mix together with a ***spreader sticker** (which makes it adhere to the foliage).

Then spray the 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.

Editor's note: ***Agri 2, Multi Purpose, Wetting Agent** is one example of this.

Removal of Caterpillars



You can wait for the birds or try the following:

Caterpillars are easily and legally knocked back by using Bt. Bt is Bacillus thuringiensis - a naturally occurring bacteria that paralyses the stomach of caterpillars. They stop eating as soon as they ingest some of this material and die of starvation a few days later. It should be available at your local garden centre.

Hint: Make sure it is this year's production - it doesn't store well over 6 months time. Cover the leaves where they are eating and the problem is solved for all caterpillars and loopers.



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“Wet Coast” Bus Tour – May 24th, 2003

John & June Deniseger

At 7am on May 24th, 45 enthusiastic Rhodoholics boarded a bus headed for Tofino. By 8 am, we were at our first stop – Urban Greenery Nursery in Cherry Creek in the outskirts of Port Alberni. It didn't take long for us to start filling up the luggage compartment with plants. Thanks to the efforts of Paul and Linda Lawry (we missed you on the trip) we had lots of prizes and games to keep everyone on the bus more than entertained. In Tofino, Ken and Dot Gibson welcomed us to their beautiful garden and a table full of goodies and coffee, tea and juice. Despite a little bit of West Coast liquid sunshine, we all enjoyed the visit immensely. However, by noon, the rain had begun in earnest as it was now absolutely pouring. It was then that I developed a new appreciation for the phrase “you have to be a little crazy to be a gardener”. Despite heavy rain, almost everyone got into a series of mostly open boats and made the 5 to 10 minute trip to Stubbs Island. Stubbs Island was amazing, a beautiful garden, rhodos to 30 feet tall, huge firs and cedars, mud 12 inches deep, a great sandy beach.... By the time we all headed back to the shelter of the bus waiting for us in Tofino, we were pretty wet and committed to coming back again on a beautiful sunny day. Back on the road again, we passed through Ucluelet to see what they had done with the rhodos that the various Vancouver Island A.R.S. chapters had donated to the village. Many of them were in bloom and already looking great (imagine in a few more years). At our last stop – Dashwood Nursery in Beaver Creek, we were once again received with a warm welcome. Would you believe, smoked salmon, cheese cake, coffee, tea, etc. Prior to arriving at Dashwood, many on the bus were getting a little tired and ready to head home. Arriving at Dashwood, a pretty cool nursery in an out-of-the-way location, was like a shot of caffeine to all of us gardeners. Everyone perked up and we all filled up the luggage compartments to the brim with plants.

Thanks again to everyone for making our “Wet Coast Bus Trip” a great success, even if it did rain.

Hello all:

We just received a letter from the Malaspina University-College Foundation notifying us that our bursary will be awarded to Polly Samland this year.

Steve Hootman sent a letter with the dates for the 2003 RSF fall plant distribution:

- ◆ Saturday October 4 - pick up plants at office
- ◆ October 6 - International ship date. I have a list of the plants available.

Craig Clarke, Secretary

Nanaimo Rhododendron Society

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ARS District 1 Chapter Presidents

The fall meeting of District 1 Chapter presidents will be held on Sunday, September 21, 2003. The Victoria chapter has offered to coordinate the day. We will be following our short format of a meeting with lunch provided. At this time, no garden tour has been planned. This may change depending on what the Victoria chapter is able to organize. The meeting is scheduled to run from 11:00 am to 2:30 pm, with ½ hour for lunch.

Those travelling from the mainland will catch the 9:00 am ferry leaving Tsawwassen and arriving in Swartz Bay at 10:35 am. We will be picked up and transported to the meeting site. The meeting site is not yet determined and will be forwarded to all attendees. At the end of the meeting we will be transported back to the Swartz Bay ferry dock. With luck we will make the 3:00 pm ferry and certainly we will catch the 4:00. This will get us back to Tsawwassen at either 4:35 or 5:35 pm.

Agenda items (Preliminary)

1. Directors Report - BOD meeting Olympia, WA. - G. Robb
2. Treasurer's report - M. Irwin
3. ARS policies - G. Robb
4. BOD agenda issues - All
5. 2003 event dates - confirm calendar - All
6. Spring open gardens - R. Knight
7. ARS Convention update - Victoria 2005 - Victoria
8. Next meeting date and locations - All

If you are making a presentation or have information to share, could you please make sufficient copies for all attendees? It looks like we will have 20 people at the meeting.

Gifford Robb
Director, District 1 ARS
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