



September 2015

President's Message

Welcome back to some cooler weather and the happy prospect of another rhododendron year. It has been a challenging summer for those of us living on Vancouver Island. Maybe we should have a rain dance at our first meeting on September 10th.

Bring a friend along to our first meeting as it is always a fun social time. We start early – at 6:30 instead of the usual 7:30 so that we can reconnect and enjoy some finger-licking, finger food! Remember that this first meeting starts with a potluck – bring your own plates and cutlery to enjoy the potluck dish that you will be bringing to share with others. Bring an appetizer, a main dish or a dessert. It always seems to work out.

There are several items that I want to share with you as we begin a new season. Firstly, all of the island chapters voted to donate the remaining 41 rhodos left from the ARS Spring Conference to a future Legacy Garden at Mary Winspear Centre in Sidney. This will allow many thousands of people in that community and the many thousands of visitors to the area to enjoy our favourite genus. A number of our members were involved with the conference, and that was one way that the Victoria Chapter was able to acknowledge our support.

The second item is that the Memorandum of Understanding between VIU, Milner Gardens and all of the Vancouver Island ARS chapters has been signed. NRS club members have been a big part of that agreement. Thanks in particular to John Denisege, who was instrumental in writing the draft of the agreement. Also, over the summer, NRS members made up the bulk of volunteers on the first work party to begin clearing the new Rhododendron Species Garden area. Way to go Nanaimo.

See you on the 10th.

Chris

EXECUTIVE

President	Chris Southwick	390-3415
Vice President	Brenda Lewis	751-3639
Secretary	Ann Beamish	758-2574
Treasurer	Krystyna Sosulski	729-0948
Directors	Craig Clarke	390-4090
	Susan Lightburn	468-7516
	Dorothee Kieser	390-4136
	Gayle McRae	758-7589
	Art Lightburn	468-7516
	Sandra Dorman	390-0136

COMMITTEES

Advertising	Jan Moles	
Library	Ann Beamish	758-2574
Newsletter	Kathryn Grant	585-2706
Membership	Sandra Dorman	390-0136
Program	Art Lightburn	468-7516
Raffle	Ann Davey & Val Harvey	
Social	Susan Lightburn	468-7516
Bargain Table	Reinhold Gorgosilich	758-6533
Website	Craig Clarke	390-4090
Sunshine	Edith Higgins	390-9340
Bus Tour	John Denisege & June Bouchard	
Truss Show	Doug Blenkarn	
Spring Sale	Ann Beamish	

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Next Meeting

Thursday September 10, 6:30 pm Beban Park Social Centre

Bob Zimmerman

"The Siren Song of the Species Rhododendron"

Twigs and Stems



Goodies for September Meeting

Potluck finger food

Finnerty at Forty

Gardening Courses at Finnerty Gardens, UVic

September 17, 7:00 pm
Pursuing the Wild: The Sichuan Botanical Expedition

September 26, 1:30 pm
Gardening with Colour

October 3, 1:30 pm
History of Finnerty Gardens

October 24, 1:00 pm
Rhododendron Propagation Workshop

<https://www.uvcs.uvic.ca/Course/Finnerty-at-Forty/ASSC248/>



Nanaimo Rhododendron Society Calendar

Our regular monthly meetings normally begin at 7:30 pm on the 2nd Thursday of the month at Beban Park Social Centre. Executive meetings begin at 2:00 pm on the 3rd Thursday of the month. Occasionally the dates change due to events at Beban Park Social Centre or if we share an exceptional speaker with another chapter. Here is the annual calendar for your information:

Sept. 10	Monthly meeting – starting at 6:30
Sept. 17	Executive meeting – at Susan and Art's
Oct. 8	Monthly meeting
Oct. 15	Executive meeting – at Brenda's
Nov. 12	Monthly meeting
Nov. 19	Executive meeting – Gaylle and Allen's
Dec. 10	Christmas Potluck and Auction – 6:30 start
Jan. 14	Monthly meeting
Jan. 21	Executive meeting – Glenda's
Feb. 11	Monthly meeting
Feb. 18	Executive meeting – Craig and Joyce's
March 10	Monthly meeting
March 17	Executive meeting – Sandra's
April 14	Monthly meeting
April 21	Executive meeting – Krystyna's
May 12	Monthly meeting
May 19	Executive meeting – TBD
June 11	Saturday - Possible date for the year-end wind up party

Our September Speaker Bob Zimmerman

The September program presents Bob Zimmerman, a well-known collector and propagator of species rhododendrons at the Chimacum Woods Nursery on the Olympic Peninsula. The program "The Siren Song of the Species Rhododendron" focuses on Bob's collection, appreciation and growing on of species rhododendrons from seed, much of it collected in the wilds of China, Tibet, Japan, Italy and Cape Cod. Bob will deliver the pre-ordered plants to the September 10 early finger food potluck meeting



On April 30th of this year, Allen McRae of our club was the spokesperson for the Clan McRae of Canada at a ceremony in the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa. The event was the unveiling of a collector's coin struck by the Royal Mint and a new stamp issued by Canada Post. Both of these are in honour of the 100th anniversary of the writing of the poem "In Flanders Fields" by Lt. Col. John McCrae. Later that weekend a beautiful bronze statue of the soldier, doctor and poet was unveiled in Ottawa to also honour him and his famous poem. Allen is shown in this photo assisting the Minister of Heritage and Culture, Shelley Glover and a representative from the mint. Note that he is wearing his new McRae tartan kilt for the occasion.

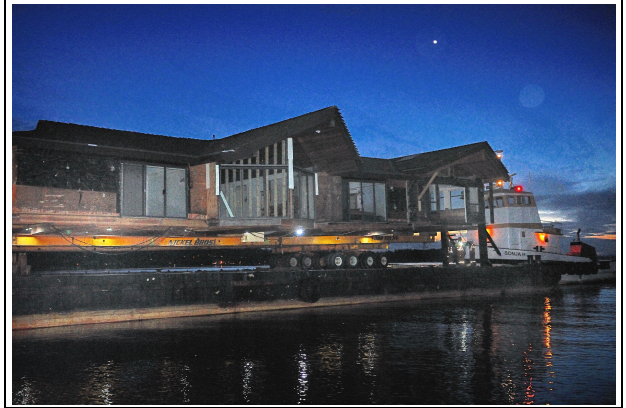
SEEN IN PASSING...

Large leaf rhododendron's new growth frazzled by the summer heat.

Months of dinners on the deck this summer.

Honeybees struggling to find nectar during our drought.

A large home in Craig Bay lifted, loaded onto a barge and towed off to a new location in the San Juan Islands.



Come Celebrate Our Start-up to the New NRS Club Year

Our September meeting will begin at 6:30 PM with our traditional finger food potluck dinner. New members and old friends will be welcomed. Please wear your nametags. Members are requested to bring one or more dishes...each suitable for serving several people...of tantalizing appetizers, seductive savories, delicious breads, crispy veggies, succulent fruits, or decadent desserts. The Social committee has requested that members bring their own plates, knives, forks, spoons, etc., and your best mugs and drinking vessels for the communal tea, coffee or punch.





NRS work crew preparing the site for the Milner Species Rhododendron Garden, June 18



September Raffle Plants



Rhododendron yuefengense
Newly introduced species

Shrub 0.5 – 1.5 m growth habit that is wider than tall, branches red-brown.

Corolla: funnel-campanulate

Leaves: broadly elliptic, shiny. Winter: evergreen

Bloomtime: midseason, May – June

Predominant colour: white to pink

Origin: Guangxi South West China 1,800 – 2,150 m



R. 'Faggetter's Favourite'

(fortunei ssp. Fortune hybrid) 6'. -20°C, M, 5/4

White, pink and cream melt together in the fragrant flower of this outstanding plant. Certainly one of the best for plant and flower! It prefers some light shade.

Forensics in the Hailey Rhododendron Grove

by Trevor Evelyn

One of my great pleasures in life is roaming through gardens, especially rhododendron gardens during bloom time. I find that “inhaling” the scene and the various fragrances is good for my soul -- and for my blood pressure! Another pleasure is trying to identify the rhodos that present themselves during my roamings. This is sometimes necessary because plants in gardens often do not bear name tags. Identifying rhodos is exciting because it is akin to forensic medicine. It also has the advantage that you merely end eating “humble pie” if you make a mistake in an identification. Compare this with the potential consequences of eating a wild mushroom that you have mis-identified! In any event, the Hailey Rhododendron Grove in Nanaimo’s Bowen Park presented a challenge because it contained some 250 rhodos and azaleas, none of which bore any name tags, and all of which were crying to be identified. This is one of the reasons I served for some time on committee of the Nanaimo Rhododendron Society (chaired by Michael Miller) relating to the Hailey Rhododendron Grove. The immediate goals of the committee were to map, catalogue, and identify the plants in the Grove. The first two goals have been achieved, with all the plants in the Grove plotted by location on a map and tagged. The third goal has not been completely met -- and probably never will be, because some of the plants in the Grove were apparently never named and registered. However, some progress has been made in identifying the plants, and the primary purpose of this article is to list those plants that have been identified with reasonable (but certainly not absolute!) certainty. As shown in the accompanying table, some 56 plants representing 44 hybrids and species have been identified. An additional 14 plants, not listed in the table, turned out to be either *R. ponticum* selections (4 plants) or hybrid azaleas (10 plants). A number of additional rhodos have been provisionally identified but mention of them will have to wait until firmer conclusions as to their actual identities are reached. It is worth noting that two hybrids, Lavender Girl and Letty Edwards, were supposedly favourites of Mrs Hailey but I have not been able to find these plants in the Grove. However, judging from the number of replicates of one particular rhodo, Mrs. Charles Pearson, present there, I surmise that this was also one of her favourites!

To aid in the identifications, my wife, Sandra, and I videotaped 200 of the rhodos and azaleas in the Grove, starting on April 12/96 and ending on June 13/96. Unfortunately, other commitments prevented the videotaping and identification of the later blooming rhodos, and so these tasks must still be done. In the interim, I propose to have Lillian Hodgson and other rhodo experts view the tapes in the hope that additional identifications can be made. (Lillian Hodgson was a friend of Mrs. Hailey and helped her make her rhododendron collection; Lillian should therefore be familiar with many of the plants that Mrs. Hailey donated to the Grove). The results from this effort will be the subject of another article in this newsletter.

As mentioned above, some four rhodos not listed in the table, appeared to be *R. ponticum* selections (A 001, B 051, B 073, and C 034). My view is that the ponticums occur in the garden not because Mrs. Hailey collected them, but because she collected some difficult-to-root plants that were grafted onto ponticum rootstocks. Evidence for this is that in two cases, we can still recognize the rhododendrons that were grafted onto ponticum rootstocks. In one of these cases, the scion being overwhelmed was actually identified. It turned out to be the very desirable but difficult-to-root hybrid, Avalanche. This rhodo (B 037) is thus listed in the table. In the case of Avalanche, it may still be possible to save it by removing the ponticum suckers. (Ponticum rootstocks are now seldom used because of their vigorous suckering habit, which tends to overwhelm the scions grafted onto them.) Another unrelated but relevant observation was that some of the identification tags placed on the plants in the spring of 1995 were already missing. It was anticipated that tag losses due to vandalism would occur, but the speed with which it has occurred is certainly disheartening. I suppose that in any public garden, vandalism is a curse that one has to learn to live with.

In the adjoining table, plants are identified by a letter/number combination. The letter denotes the bed in which the plants are located; a question mark indicates that the plant’s ID tag could not be found

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and that the ID code number was inferred from those of neighboring plants and by reference to a map on which the plants' positions have all been plotted.

Rhododendron	Plant tag ID
Aladdin	B 011
Angelo	B 012
Anna Rose Whitney	C 038
<i>R. augustinii</i>	C 060
Autumn Gold (Margaret Dunn g.)	A 065
Avalanche	B 037
Beauty of Littleworth	A 057
Blue Peter	C 061
Bow Bells	A 016?
C.I.S.	A 035
Carita	E 033
<i>R. concinnum</i>	A 020
Cotton Candy	A 070
Cunningham's White	C 036
Fabia Tangerine	C 057
Faggetter's Favourite	A 022
Fatuosum Flore Pleno	B 003
<i>R. fortunei</i>	C 051
Goldsworth Pink	B 006; B 007
Jean Marie de Montague	E 034?
Jock	A 012?; B 016
King of Shrubs (Margaret Dunn g.)	C 017
Lem's Monarch	B 075
Loderi g.	A 054; B 027
Luscombei	A 011?
Marinus Koster	C 031
Matador	B 076
Moonstone	A 015?
Mrs A.T. de la Mare	C 080
Mrs. Charles Pearson	C 043; E 019; E 029; F 002; F 003
Mrs. G.W. Leak	B 005; E 001
Mrs. Lindsay Smith	B 029
Mrs. Walter Burns	B 023
Mrs. W.C. Slocock	A 046; C 018
Naomi g.	B 002; B033?
<i>R. schlippenbachii</i>	A 064
Sonata	B 066
Snow Queen	C 009
Susan	E 025
Thomwilliams	C044
Thor	C 041
Unique	A 049; C 040
Vulcan	A 014; C 042
White Swan	C 084

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Rhodos Worth Growing



Rhododendron 'Jean Marie de Montague'

(griffithianum hybrid) 5', -20°C, M, 4/4.

Practically every new red introduced must be judged against 'Jean Marie' (as it is often called) to see if it is better and few actually pass the grade. 'Jean Marie' has bright red flowers so showy that you can't miss them. The thick, heavy foliage stands sun and is deep emerald-green. Few plants have foliage as green.



Rhododendron 'Teddy Bear'

(bureavii x degronianum ssp. yakushimanum) 3', -17°C, EM, 4/5.

An exceptional plant for foliage, in fact probably one of the finest in the Genus Rhododendron. The leaves are deep glossy green and the underside of the foliage is covered with woolly fur called indumentum. The indumentum starts out white on the new foliage and eventually turns a delightful cinnamon brown. Large pink flowers with lighter pink centers cover the beautiful foliage each spring.

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NRS 2015 Bus Tour Photographs by Susan Lightburn

