



# The Rhodomentum

## Nanaimo Rhododendron Society Newsletter

September 2020



### President's Message

To all, a very hearty welcome back! Even in this pandemic time, I hope you had a wonderful gardening summer.

There is much ahead of us to enjoy in our new NRS gardening year but first of all, let us congratulate Susan and Art Lightburn for recently receiving the Silver Medal from the ARS - a very well-deserved recognition! Congratulations also to Dorothee Kieser, who is now president of Master Gardeners, with Chris Southwick becoming past president.

We are sorry to see Liz Higgins leaving the Treasurer position, and Krystyna Sosulski the Membership Chair. Both ladies have contributed very much to our club through the years, with Krystyna being part of the Executive team since 2012. Thank you, Liz and Krystyna, from all of us at NRS!

Jan Moles decided to switch from being our Secretary to taking the Membership Chair, and Deborah Francis is stepping into Jan's shoes and will become our new Secretary. Welcome Deborah! **All of these changes will be voted on at our AGM on Sunday, September 13<sup>th</sup>. The meeting will be held at Nanaimo's Community Gardens at Beban Park starting at 2:00 pm** - thanks to Dorothee Kieser for arranging the venue. Due to pandemic regulations, a reservation is a must for contact tracing purposes – please contact Rosina for reservations. After our AGM, we will be discussing the "Highlights of your Garden".

Your Executive Team was busy during the summer months and are proposing the following:

- Organize a members-only plant sale at Chris Southwick's home. Contact: Chris.
- Organize a ZOOM education class. Contact: Rosina.
- Have members-only Fall garden open houses. Contact: Chris or Rosina.
- Have members-only Spring garden open houses. Contact: Chris.
- Continue with next propagation event as soon as VIU gives us the go-ahead. (Watch for announcement.)
- Continue with Hailey Rhododendron Grove work party one Tuesday of each month between 10h and 14h (details on p. 10). Volunteers urgently needed. Contact: Bryan Jubinville.
- Continuing with Milner Gardens work party each Friday at 9h. Volunteers urgently needed. Just show up.
- Help Ken Webb and others find good gardening speakers for online presentations in lieu of in-person meetings.

**Any other suggestion for social get-togethers would be greatly appreciated.**

### OUR EXECUTIVE

President	Rosina Schmidt	751-3386
Vice President	Chris Southwick	390-3415
Past President	Allen McRae	758-7589
Secretary	Jan Moles	390-9340
Treasurer	Liz Higgins	390-9340
Directors	Bryan Jubinville	956-6178
	Art Lightburn	468-7516
	Susan Lightburn	468-7516
	Gayle McRae	758-7589
	Don Noakes	778 441-4783
	Ron Sutton	416 951-1373

### COMMITTEES:

Advertising	Allen McRae
Library	Ann Beamish / Sandra Dorman
Newsletter	June Bouchard / John Deniseger
Membership	Krystyna Sosulski
Program	Committee
Raffle	Ann Davey & Val Harvey
Social	Deborah Francis
Bargain Table	Reinhold Gorgosolich/Don Noakes
Website	Deborah Francis
Bus Tour	David & Joyce Mitchell
Sunshine	Ann Beamish
Propagation	Rosina Schmidt

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email: [rhodomentum@nanaimorhodos.ca](mailto:rhodomentum@nanaimorhodos.ca)

We would like to thank Liz Higgins especially for setting up the option of paying our membership fees electronically, as discussed recently in the memo sent to all members. A very warm thank-you to everyone who is contributing in any which way to making this club the great success that it is.

See you on the 13<sup>th</sup> at Community Gardens Centre at Beban Park!

Rosina

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## *Congratulations to Susan and Art Lightburn for their joint Silver Medal!!!*

Here's the official wording from this prestigious ARS Award:

*"Art and Susan Lightburn have been long-term members and supporters of the ARS and the genus rhododendron through hosting garden tours in their magnificent garden, presentations, club displays, and by serving on the executive of both NRS and MARS for many years. Susan's photography has enhanced not only our local newsletters, websites, and the ARS*

*Journal, but in documents around the world where exceptional photography of rhododendrons are required. Art and Susan have been tremendous supporters of the Greig Rhododendron Species Garden at Milner Garden and Woodland in Qualicum Beach, B. C. including their gift of more than fifty mature species rhododendrons. Their generosity will help to educate and foster a love of rhododendrons for generations to come on Vancouver Island."*



*Well done!!!*

Next meeting: Sunday September 13th,  
Nanaimo's Community Gardens at Beban Park  
"Highlights of our Gardens" and our AGM

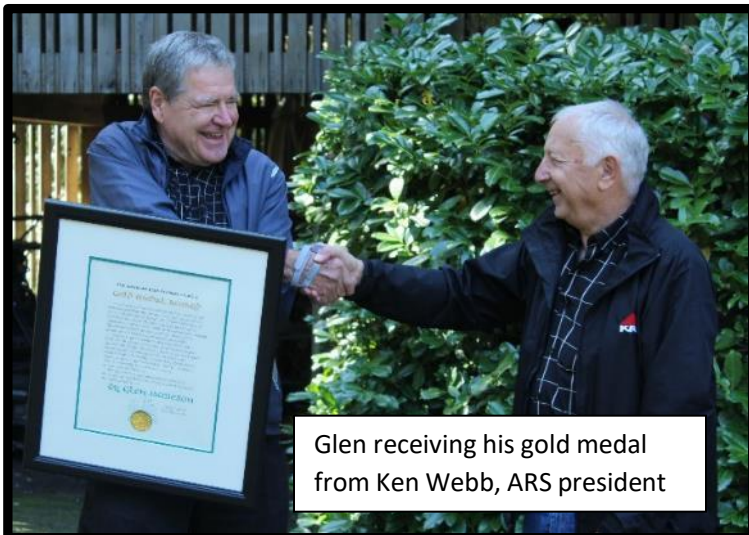
Due to COVID guidelines – please contact Rosina to reserve a seat – space is limited

## *The NRS needs a new treasurer!*

*Community Clubs like the Nanaimo Rhododendron Society rely heavily on volunteers to "get things done"! We are very fortunate to have so many dedicated people in our midst. Our Executive positions are largely filled, with the notable exception of treasurer. Please consider stepping up to become our treasurer. We could really use your help!*



*A great big thank you to Liz Higgins,  
our outgoing treasurer!*



Glen receiving his gold medal  
from Ken Webb, ARS president

## *Congratulations to another Islander- Glen Jamieson*

Glen Jamieson, long time MARS member and current president, and Journal of the ARS editor, recently was awarded the ARS Gold Medal for his outstanding contributions to the society.

*Congratulations Glen!!*



## *"Staying Connected" "through it all..."*

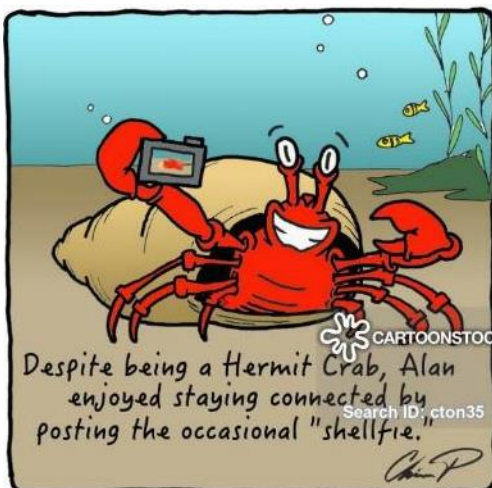
This is our fourth newsletter since our lives took an unusual twist with the current pandemic situation. In our April and May newsletters, we featured gardening and humour as great therapy tools as we adjust to this "new normal". In our June newsletter, we suggested to adopt an "attitude of gratitude" and focus on the positive rather than dwelling on the negative. Continuing on our focus on healthy ways to move through these unusual times, we think that "staying connected" is an important way to stay social despite the distance – to keep the "social" at the forefront of "social distancing". "During crisis situations, it is important that we lean on each other for support as we are stronger as a collective than as a single individual," (Dr. Matthew Boyle, from <https://health.sunnybrook.ca/covid-19-coronavirus/ways-to-stay-social-despite-the-distance/> )



Research tells us that: "being socially connected is considered a fundamental human need. (...) Human beings are social creatures. Our connection to others enables us to battle diseases, thrive and survive. And research shows that people who take part in meaningful, productive and social activities generally live longer, have a sense of purpose and maintain a better mood." (From <https://www.icaa.cc/blog/2020-04/10-ways-to-stay-connected-during-COVID-19.htm> )

There are so many ways to stay connected: connect with your family, your friends, your neighbours, your colleagues, or join a group with whom you share similar interests. Check the above links for other ideas on how to stay connected – or find your own – there are lots of constructive suggestions online on how to keep in touch!

Within our own club, we have a number of opportunities to connect with each other without breaching the guidelines of social distancing. We have been going to the Greig Species Garden at Milner on most Friday mornings through the summer and, in addition to spending time in the serenity of a beautiful garden, the most fun part of it has been to chat with people as we weed. Another NRS group has been spending time at Hailey Grove in Bowen park and enjoyed the same benefits of working together while connecting with each other. And as soon as VIU gives the ok to the propagation group to return to the Payne Centre, you'll have another option to get together with a fine group of gardening friends!



There are plans underway for "digital" presentations and forums using Zoom or similar platforms. These may be developed by the ARS, District 1 or by the NRS. They'll be a great opportunity for continued learning and conversations, while staying connected to club activities. Check our website, emails and future newsletters for further details as they arise. If you've changed your email address, please let Rosina know.

Meanwhile, enjoy your September garden, be grateful for the good things in life, and keep smiling!

Cheers,  
June and John

## Fall Open Gardens!!!

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 Garden will be on Wednesday, **September 16th from 3 to 5**. Jan Moles and Liz Higgins' new garden will be open as will Rosina Schmidt's garden. Both gardens have some interesting trees, shrubs, perennials and annuals.

- Liz and Jan live at: **7122 Dickinson Road**, Lantzville
- Rosina lives at: **3196 Merry Men Way**, Nanaimo

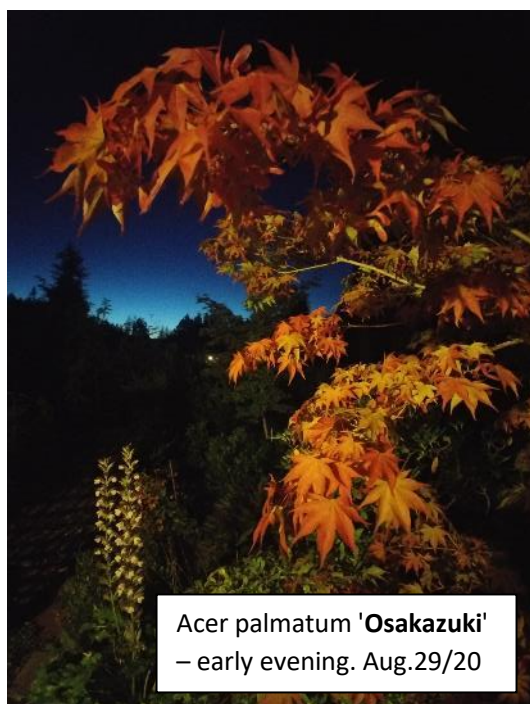


Later in the fall, Chris Southwick has chosen **Saturday, October 3rd** to open her garden, also from 3 to 5. **Another garden is needed for that day.**

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 plan 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 your gardens to the NRS members, please let organizer Chris Southwick know.

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Acer palmatum 'Osakazuki'  
– early evening. Aug.29/20

*Hints of  
Fall colour  
in Bowser!*



Acer palmatum 'Osakazuki'  
– morning Sept. 4/20



## *Heard in Passing....*

- We could sure use more help for these work bees!
- We miss the rhodo group....
- Really good growth on our rhodos this year!
- It'll be good to see everyone again....
- Our fruit trees have produced so much....
- How did we get to September so quickly?

## *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!

- Friday morning work bees at the Greig Species Garden – 9 am to noon – contact John if you'd like to join in.
- Hailey Grove at Bowen Park – monthly work bees – see details on page 10.
- 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.
- Milner Gardens and Woodland fall plant sale – for members only - September 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> - 10 am to 4 pm.
- NRS members-only fall garden open houses – see p. 5 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/>*



## Propagating Jim Barlup's Hybrids by Rosina T. Schmidt

In the past, we have listened to presentations on Jim Barlup's rhododendron hybrids, the 2004 ARS Gold medal winner for his more than 250 rhododendron hybrids, including many award winners.

We learned that after his retirement in 1974, he started landscaping his yard but did not find the yellow and orange rhododendrons that he was looking for. Since it seemed that there were just a few in existence, he decided to hybridize his own.

After years of trial and error, he was satisfied with the colour, truss shape and foliage, especially those hybrids that combined East Coast hardiness and West Coast plants of superior beauty. But he was searching for more:

- Plants that set flower buds at a young age;
- Compact plants with excellent foliage;
- Flower colours that are bright and have interesting colorations;
- Trusses that are upright rather than lax.

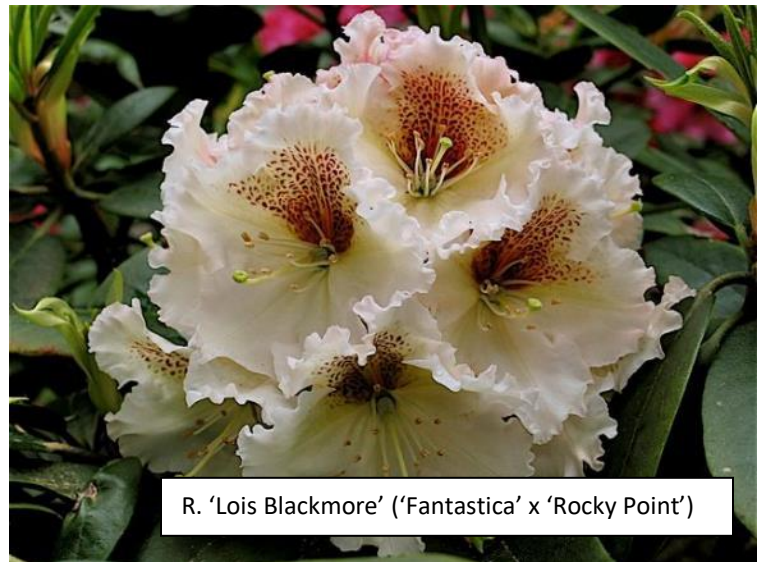
With time, patience and the cooperation of others, he more



R. 'Fire Rim' ('Nancy Evans' x 'Pink Petticoats')

than achieved his goal of developing superior hybrids in all colour ranges. No wonder that back in April 2019, the Victoria Chapter planted about 70 of Jim's rhododendrons in the Esquimalt Gorge Park. When in Victoria, it would be a good idea to visit that public park and see the progress of Jim's hybrids. Here's a link to Jim Barlup's winning hybrids:

<https://www.pinterest.ca/loisblackmore/jim-barlupaward-winning-rhododendron-hybridizer/>



R. 'Lois Blackmore' ('Fantastica' x 'Rocky Point')

On Dick Beamish's suggestion, the NRS Propagating Team would love to propagate any Jim Barlup hybrids that we may have in our gardens.

If your garden is lucky enough to have any of Jim's hybrids, please let me know so our propagators can contact you regarding cuttings when we get the go-ahead by VIU.

In the meantime, happy gardening!

## 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 24<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at the Parksville Community and Conference Center.

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

### *The Greig Rhododendron Species Garden*

After nearly 5 months, we were able to get back to the Greig Species garden in late July. The rhododendrons and companion plants have thrived, with lots of flowers and good growth. Not too surprisingly, the weeds had also been thriving. Weekly Friday morning work bees soon took care of most of the weeds. Many hands truly do make light work! The Friday work bees will be continuing through the fall with more light weeding and lots of mulching.



*A morning  
spent in a  
beautiful  
garden with  
friends -  
PERFECT!*

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*"The foliage has been losing its freshness through the month of August, and here and there a yellow leaf shows itself like the first gray hair amidst the locks of a beauty who has seen one season too many."*

*- Oliver Wendell Holmes*



## *Stars of Summer*

Here on the west coast, rhododendrons are undeniably one of the stars of the spring garden. We look forward to the show all winter long. While it is true that with some planning, we can have rhodos in bloom in mid-summer, it is nothing like the spectacular spring display. It's time for other plants to become the "stars of summer".

We're fortunate to have neighbours who have a beautiful summer garden, dominated by dahlias. Karen (with lots of help from Bill) has been hooked on dahlias for over 30 years. It was "love at first sight"! Today, in their Bowser garden, they grow over 450 varieties and about 1500 dahlias. It is a spectacular display!

Some of you may remember that Karen and Bill generously contributed dahlias to our last Christmas fundraising auction. Here's a link to their website <https://www.ddcdahlias.com/>

Here are a few photos highlighting some of the stars of their dahlia garden.



Polly Kaye



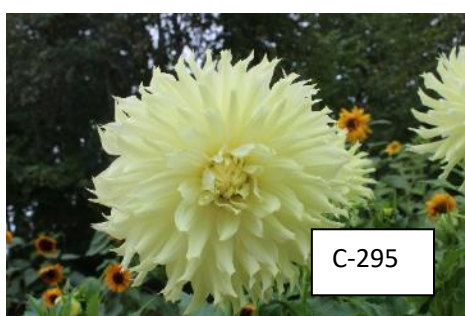
Hollyhill Spiderwoman



Bowser Sunshine



Tahoma Lace



C-295



Harvey Koop



Chimacum Troy



Crème de Cassis



Karen and Bill with Belle of Barmera

## *Hailey Rhododendron Grove at Bowen Park - photos by Rosina Schmidt*

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: September 15<sup>th</sup>, October 13<sup>th</sup>, November 17<sup>th</sup>, and December 15<sup>th</sup>. Hope you can join us!!**



*~ photos from the August 10<sup>th</sup>  
work bee - lots of smiles all  
around - fresh air and a sense of  
accomplishment!*

**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, VOR 2H0; or bring your cheque to the meeting on September 13<sup>th</sup>.
- Electronically: e-transfer to [lizhiggins24@gmail.com](mailto: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!



## *Death Cap Mushrooms* – thank you Liisa Rullo for bringing this to our attention

Hi all – our ‘Covid summer’ is whizzing by and Bob and I haven’t been motivated to do much, or go anywhere this summer. Bob planted a vegetable garden for the first time in his life (oh my), and we might even get real tomatoes before the end of August! Otherwise, it’s all about the pets and spending way too much time watching Trump on the news, and reading articles online for entertainment in the evenings, of which the below is one. We’re staying out of circulation while we’re trying to get on top of the yard work and the projects that never end (notice I did not say ‘stay on top’ because we’re not even close). So far so good – we’re lucky on Vancouver Island to have low numbers for the virus.



Regarding the nature theme, I chanced across this article in The Atlantic on ‘death cap’ mushrooms, *Amanita phalloides*. It’s important information to share as most people probably don’t know about it (I sure didn’t). According to the article, these nasty mushrooms have taken up residence on Vancouver Island and have spread widely on the lower mainland, and are expected to survive in somewhat colder climates like the Okanagan Valley. My mother used to pick wild mushrooms and she made us aware of some dangerous ones, but these weren’t around then. The mushrooms are deadly, but in photos they look just like the good ones you might eat. Cooking doesn’t inactivate the toxin. Even when the mushroom is boiled and the water is discarded, the toxin remains. People who regularly pick mushrooms may know about them, but gardeners should be aware of them too, as well as families with kids. The mushrooms like cities just as much as rural areas. The article notes they particularly like to grow near Hornbeam trees and other deciduous trees like nut trees. Hornbeams are a nice-looking street tree with distinctive leaves, often planted along boulevards or in subdivisions, with many found in Victoria (they are planted along a stretch of Government Street). See Hornbeam photos below. <https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2019/02/deadly-mushroom-arrives-canada/581602/>



Further to the above, here are a couple of items with complete descriptions of the mushroom and how to handle them, & good photos: <http://www.mykoweb.com/TFWNA/P-05.html>

<http://www.bccdc.ca/resourcegallery/Documents/Educational%20Materials/EH/FPS/Fruit%20and%20Veg/AmanitaPhalloidesMushroomsInCityEnvironmentsInBritishColumbiaBriefingPackageForParksAndMunicipalities.pdf>

Isn’t science great? But some ‘new’ discoveries are not really welcome! Read on & tell folks you know.

Best regards to everyone,

Liisa



## *From the garden AND the kitchen AND the bookshelves!!!*

by June Bouchard



The food garden is another “star of summer” with its ongoing bounty from spring into fall and even through the winter for some of us! Every garden has its own variety of goodies but most will feature tomatoes. Looking at our own mountain of this very versatile vegetable (or is it a fruit???), I’m always looking for new ways to preserve some of that wonderful summer flavour for the winter months. The following is from one of my favourite gardening books – *The Zero-Mile Diet: A Year-Round Guide to Growing Organic Food* by Carolyn Herriot. (You might also be interested in its companion book – *The Zero-Mile Diet Cookbook: Seasonal Recipes for Delicious Homegrown Food*.) I usually triple or quadruple this recipe and store it in small 1 cup-size containers – make sure to label and date them before putting them in the freezer. Enjoy with corn chips and a cool drink of your choice on a cold winter day – it’s bound to bring back that lovely summery feeling!



### **Salsa Fresca**

- 1 c. chopped tomatoes
- ¼ c. finely chopped onions
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 tsp. jalapeno pepper, seeds removed and minced
- 3 tbsps. fresh cilantro, chopped
- 1 lime, juiced
- Salt and pepper to taste

Mix all ingredients together and leave to marinate for a couple of hours. Strain off liquid (I keep it to add to either soup broth or salad dressing) and freeze in ice-cube trays or in small tubs. Perfect for the winter munchies!

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*Happy September to All!*

*Hope to see many of you at the September 13<sup>th</sup> meeting - and at various work bees through the fall! Stay connected - check our web page regularly!*