



The Rhodomentum

Nanaimo Rhododendron Society Newsletter

September 2021



President's Message

Welcome to the 29th year of the Nanaimo Rhododendron Society!

It is a great honour to report that last year's hardworking executive team has graciously decided to lead us for the next term also, with the addition of two new directors: Dorothee Kieser and Ann Beamish, as previously announced. Thank you all and welcome back, Ann and Dorothee!

Our thanks to Rea and Ron Sutton for hosting us again in July at their beautiful acreage property in Fanny Bay. We not only enjoyed seeing all those new plant additions but their very warm hospitality too.

Sad news reached us from Oregon that Harold Greer the author of "Greer's Guidebook to Available Rhododendrons" passed away recently through an unfortunate accident. This is a great loss to the Rhododendron community. Wanda Brenton, our Sunshine person, sent a condolence card to Nancy Greer, Harold's wife and business partner, on behalf of the NRS.

While our gardens enjoyed a spectacular spring, the summer became more challenging with heat, no rain and water shortages. It would be good to know which rhododendrons were hardier than others with water conservation in mind. And, sure enough, a thick woodchip-mulch was a great help.

When the rain rolls in, it is the best time to relocate any rhododendron that needs a new spot, to plant spring-flowering bulbs and to plant garlic in your vegetable garden by incorporating composted manure.

Our 9th of September meeting at 2pm will be at the Nanaimo Community Gardens in Beban Park. Thank you, Dorothee Kieser, for arranging it once again. Please dress according to the weather and bring your own lawn chair. Each of us will talk about 'the best of my garden'. It will be good to see you all again.

Our yearly dues will be the same as in the years past and are due in September. (See p.3 for details)

See you in September,

Rosina

Next meeting: Thursday, September 9th, 2 pm
Nanaimo's Community Gardens at Beban Park
"Highlights of our Gardens" and our AGM



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 Gorgosilich
Website	Deborah Francis/Rosina Schmidt
Bus Tour	David & Joyce Mitchell
Sunshine	Wanda Brenton
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	

Looking Ahead to the Upcoming Months...

The N.R.S. executive has worked hard over the last 18 months to keep our club active and connected despite the all too familiar challenges of the pandemic. We've had outdoor gatherings at Ron and Rea Sutton's home in Fanny Bay and at the Nanaimo Community Gardens; open gardens and garden tours; an on-line Christmas auction; small local plant sales and many excellent on-line presentations via Zoom. Many of our club's members have contributed to the work bees both at Hailey Grove in Bowen Park and at the Greig Rhododendron Species Garden at Milner. Our propagation group has continued to build our stock of plants by taking more cuttings and nurturing those that had rooted in previous years. Chris Southwick worked with the Vancouver Island Regional Library to present a rhododendron seminar. Shaw Spotlight put together a video on the Greig Species Garden, which featured 2 of our members. We have all been trying to find ways to make things work. Our gardens and the need to stay connected have never been more important.



Looking ahead to the fall, we continue to live in uncertain times which makes planning difficult. Nevertheless, as we move forward, the executive continues to work with our program committee, as well as the other District 1 chapters and the A.R.S., in putting together a calendar of events. While our September meeting will be outdoors, we are continuing to plan for regular indoor meetings this fall as well as zoom presentations. In addition, District 1 will be presenting a monthly on-line speaker series. Through the fall, work bees will be starting up again at both Hailey and at Milner. In October, the NRS is teaming up with MARS and the Vancouver Island Master

Gardeners Association to present "Fall into Gardening". This is a 2-day on-line event that you don't want to miss (**see page 7 for details**)! The lineup of speakers is outstanding! If you haven't tried Zoom yet, we encourage you to give it a try. No, it's not the same as getting together in-person, but it allows us to access a huge range of presentations and information from the comfort of your own home.

Hope to see you this fall!

June and John
Newsletter Editors

September is more than a month, really; it is a season, an achievement in itself. It begins with August's leftovers and it ends with October's preparations... ~Hal Borland

Our Summer Picnic at Ron and Rea Sutton's Home in Fanny Bay (photos by Megan Francis)

On a warm summer afternoon in late July, NRS members gathered to enjoy each other's company and reconnect. It was so nice to see such a great turnout, including a number of people from other Vancouver Island chapters. Thank you, Ron and Rea, for so generously hosting everyone!





Membership Renewal:

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.

- Electronically: e-transfer to rondsutton@shaw.ca
- By cheque, mail to: Ron Sutton, 7310 Cougar Smith Rd.,
Fanny Bay, B.C
V0R 1W0
- Or bring your cheque to the meeting on September 9th. Jan said she will “come armed with membership cards and receipts already written up”, and of course, she will be ready to take memberships at the meeting.

In each case, please specify if for a single membership, family membership or associate.

Heard in Passing....

- “I’m so tired of watering and dragging the hose around” (we’ve heard this one a lot!).
- When will it rain? (Heard this a lot too.)
- Much of the garden and “mother nature” looks tired.
- The garden harvest has been amazing!!
- Some of our rhodos really suffered this summer...
- Lots of flower buds set for next spring...
- Mulching and trees for shade have made such a difference.



But now in September the garden has cooled, and with it my possessiveness. The sun warms my back instead of beating on my head ... The harvest has dwindled, and I have grown apart from the intense midsummer relationship that brought it on. - Robert Finch

Garden Photo of the Month

This is a new column for our newsletter, as suggested by our president, Rosina. To start us off, Dick Beamish has sent a photo of his Crepe Myrtle tree, which is blooming for the very first time in their garden.



“Lagerstroemia, commonly known as crape (or crepe) myrtle, is a genus of around 50 species of deciduous and evergreen trees and shrubs native to the Indian subcontinent, southeast Asia, northern Australia, and other parts of Oceania, cultivated in warmer climates around the world.” (From Wikipedia)

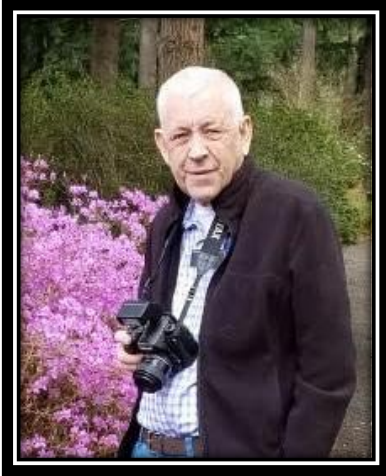


Mason Bees Observation – from Rosina

Hopefully you also had plenty of full Mason bee tubes this past spring. In my backyard, they were truly a hardworking bunch. I collected about 200 tubes, replacing each tube when it was fully sealed with a new one. They are now in punched-with-holes metal containers in my garage waiting for spring. The nests with the last batch of full tubes still in them are still in the garden. By now, the tubes are of course all ‘robbed’ of the eggs in them by the birds, so I will clean them and bring them in to set them outside in February, but refrigerate the cocoons until released. When bloom is about a week away, I will set cocoons outside for release.

Stay connected - check our web page - new things added regularly! <http://nanaimorhodos.ca/>

Harold Greer ~ 1945-2021



Harold Eldon Greer, 76, passed away unexpectedly on August 10, 2021, while tending to his landscape and his beloved rhododendrons. Harold was born to Edgar and Esther Peterson Greer on May 21, 1945, in Greeley, Colorado. His family moved to Eugene, Oregon, when Harold was seven years old and shortly thereafter Harold was introduced to the world of plant materials, and specifically, rhododendrons, by his father. What began as a shared hobby between father and son soon became a business, Greer Gardens Nursery, originally located in the River Road area. In 1961, the family purchased a parcel of land on Goodpasture Island Road and moved the nursery to the site which would be home to the business for the next 50 years.

Harold graduated from North Eugene High School and attended the University of Oregon, but his passion from a very young age was plant materials and rhododendrons. As a teenager, he was the youngest person to be accepted into membership of the Eugene Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society and by the age of 22, he was the youngest person to ever be appointed as a Director for the American Rhododendron Society. His involvement with the international organization continued as he served in a progression of officer roles, culminating as President of the American Rhododendron Society, again as the youngest person ever to do so. Additionally, he served on many ARS committees throughout his lifetime.

Along with his love of rhododendrons, Harold possessed a talent for photography, another passion which continued throughout his lifetime. He had a very good eye for composition and color. Over the years, he photographed thousands of plant blooms, trusses, and leaves, which became the illustrations for the many articles and presentations he prepared. In addition, Harold wrote and illustrated several books about rhododendrons, the best known of which is "Greer's Guidebook To Available Rhododendrons". Harold loved to share his wealth of knowledge about the plant world but he was always striving to learn more. In addition to the American Rhododendron Society, he belonged to the Royal Horticultural Society, the Magnolia Society, the Camellia Society and he was a board member for the Rhododendron Species Foundation in Federal Way, Washington. Harold also loved to travel and he incorporated his thirst for knowledge into the many horticultural tours he and his wife, Nancy, led Japan, New Zealand, Australia, Germany, France, England, Scotland, Ireland and the Scandinavian region over the many years of their life together.

In 2015, as Harold looked forward to retirement, he sold the Greer Gardens Nursery property to The Springs Living, a retirement and senior living company based in McMinnville, Oregon. Harold worked with the new owner, Fee Stubblefield, and his team at The Springs Living to envision and bring into existence a multi-level retirement community on the property, surrounded by beautiful gardens containing the rare and unique rhododendrons Harold had collected and nurtured during his lifetime. An additional aspect of the new construction was a new home for Harold and Nancy's comfort and enjoyment in their retirement years. The Springs at Greer Gardens will always remain as a reminder of Harold's passion for rhododendrons and beautiful gardens.

Harold is survived by his wife of 55 years, Nancy (Scott) Greer; his sister, Elizabeth Montel, of Grants Pass; his sister-in-law, Linda Southwick, of Eugene; his nephew, Scott Reese and wife, Susan, of Eugene; niece Wendy Hitztes and husband, Will, of Denver, Colorado; niece Cassie Gaudette and husband, Brian, of West Point, New York; and numerous other nieces and nephews. A Memorial Service is being planned for a later date. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Research Foundation of the American Rhododendron Society or to the Rhododendron Species Foundation of Washington.

By all these lovely tokens, September days are here. With summer's best of weather and autumn's best of cheer. - Helen Hunt Jackson



2021 Virtual ARS Fall Conference “Fall into Gardening” October 23 and 24, 2021

Hosted by Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society and Nanaimo Rhododendron Society in partnership
with Vancouver Island Master Gardeners

**This virtual conference is FREE and open to all interested gardeners - members
and non-members – anywhere in the world!**



ARS 2021 Fall Conference *Fall into Gardening* Schedule:

- **Saturday and Sunday, October 23 and 24, 2021 at NO COST!!**
- Four presentations each day starting at:
9 am Pacific - 12 noon Eastern – 1:00 pm Atlantic – 5 pm UK – 6 pm CET
- **All presentations will be recorded and available for our members in NZ, Australia & Asia to view at a convenient time.**

Saturday Speakers and Topics:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| • Hartwig Schepker, Germany | <i>Sichuan: A Plantsman's Paradise</i> |
| • Shannon Berch, BC Canada | <i>Living Soils</i> |
| • David Sellars, BC Canada | <i>From Rhododendrons to Rock Gardening</i> |
| • Don Hyatt, Virginia USA | <i>A Walk in the Woods</i> |

Sunday Speakers and Topics:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| • David Millais, UK | <i>Conservation of Heritage Rhododendrons</i> |
| • Linda Chalker-Scott, WA USA | <i>Landscape Mulches: The Good, the Bad,
and the Just Plain Ugly</i> |
| • Richard Dionne, QC USA | <i>Growing Rhododendrons in Québec's
Harsh Winters</i> |
| • Don Wallace, CA USA | <i>Fragrant Rhododendrons</i> |

To Join us please register using Mailchimp: [Click here](#)

Please join us for this fall celebration of gardening!

Fuchsia campos-portoi, deciduous, perennial (from Rosina)



Fuchsia is a delightful charmer in the garden. It originates from the wet mountain areas of tropical America. The perennial varieties grow very well in the shade and a wind protected spot in our area, especially with a heavy mulch that helps in keeping the soil moist. It blooms on new wood from late spring to first frost. The hummingbirds frequent the unscented flowers all day long. The evergreen variety does not survive outdoors in our climate.

Plant of the month - by Ron Sutton

Rhododendron 'Canadian Sunset'

Here is a wonderful Lofthouse hybrid plant with beautiful pink flowers with a darker pink picotee edge. My plant, seen here in the photo, blooms late April to early May. It is a cross between *R. degronianum ssp yakushimanum* x 'Gipsy King'. It is said to grow to 3 feet in 10 years, and by my own observation, is not a fast grower. It is listed as being hardy to -21°C. I acquired my plant from Hidden Acres Nursery, which is now closed, but Art's Nursery on the mainland has it listed on their website

Photo taken May 3rd.



Lizards of Vancouver Island – by Ron Sutton

Canada has 5 known species of lizards, two of which are found on Vancouver Island, the northern alligator lizard and common wall lizard.

I recently came across a native northern alligator lizard on our lawn, and it's the first one I've seen in the 3.5 years living in Fanny Bay. I kept lizards as pets when I was a young teenager, so finding a lizard here is pretty cool.

An internet search revealed that the island has lots of lizards in the southern part of the island, mainly the Saanich area, with many wall lizards thriving there.

The common wall lizard isn't native to the island, it's from Italy and was released here in the late 1960's. It is estimated that there are over 700,000 on the island.

Attached photo is of the northern alligator lizard found on our lawn. For more information about wall lizards, read the story in the following link

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/invasive-wall-lizards-1.6034646>



WORK BEES:

An opportunity to spend time outdoors in a beautiful rhododendron garden, while socializing with friends (at a distance, of course...) Sounds pretty attractive doesn't it....

- Greig Rhododendron Species Garden at Milner –work bees have not begun yet but will likely reappear later in the fall. Contact John at juneandjohn@shaw.ca if you'd like to join in.
- Hailey Grove at Bowen Park – it's been a while as we took the summer off. The next monthly work bee will be on Tuesday, September 14th from 10 am to 2 pm, as we return to our regular monthly schedule. Bring your lunch and sunny disposition.

Hailey Rhododendron Grove at Bowen Park by Bryan Jubinville

<http://nanaimorhodos.ca/hailey/>

Hailey Garden update is short and sweet. The plan is to re establish the work bee in September on the usual second Tuesday of the month. I believe this September it is the 14th - same time and station.

Rosina indicated she was in the garden this past month; she observed a fair amount of sunburn on some of the rhodos. Must have been during the extreme heat we had earlier this summer. She also said some of the sprinklers have been serviced by the city, I am hoping they will have directed the water to the places of need.

See you on the 14th!

VIU's Milner Gardens & Woodland Receives Provincial Support to Aid in Recovery from Pandemic



Photo courtesy VIU News from a tour of the Gardens on Thursday July 29, 2021 including Melanie Mark - Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport with Dr. Deborah Saucier - President and Vice-Chancellor, Vancouver Island University, Adam Walker - MLA Parksville-Qualicum, John Denisegeer - Chair, Milner Gardens and Woodland Society, and Geoff Ball - Executive Director, Milner Gardens & Woodland.

The public garden is one of 80 anchor attractions and tour bus operators in BC receiving funding (by VIU News)

After a year and a half of drastically reduced visiting hours and revenues, Vancouver Island University's (VIU's) Milner Gardens & Woodland will receive a grant from the BC Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport to aid in recovery from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The public garden is one of 80 attractions and tour bus operations that is receiving the funding through the Major Anchor Attractions Program, first announced in May 2021, in recognition of the important role major attractions play in BC's economy by drawing visitors to communities and supporting local small businesses throughout the province.

"We are extremely grateful for this much needed support from the Ministry," says Geoff Ball, Executive Director of Milner Gardens & Woodland. "The impacts from COVID have been incredibly challenging for Milner Gardens & Woodland and threatened our ability to continue to offer our visitors and community the escape they seek here. This funding will secure our ability to carry on the path of safely restoring and growing our programs and experiences."

Greig Rhododendron Species Garden at Milner

Thanks to the efforts of many volunteers, the Greig Rhododendron Species Garden at Milner is looking fabulous. From April through early July, there were a series of weekly work bees where volunteers pulled weeds, put up shade cloth in advance of the summer heat, and spread more than 100 cubic yards or arborist's mulch. Through the summer, volunteers have been



checking the plants twice weekly to monitor the impacts of the summer drought and water vulnerable plants as needed. As a result, the species garden is drawing lots of attention and is thriving. The companion plants and specimen trees have really grown. The bud set for next year is looking promising! Further work planned for the fall includes more companion plants and a few more rhododendrons (there's always room for a few more).



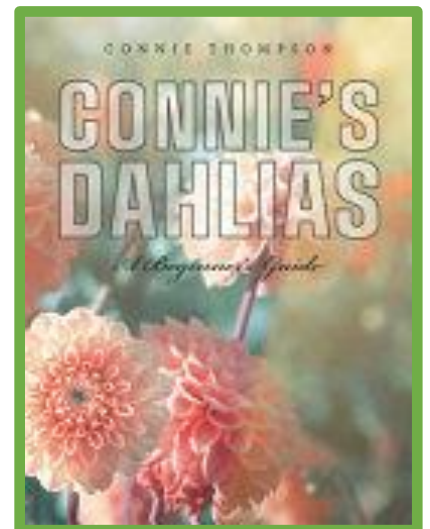
Earlier in the summer, Shaw Spotlight did a feature on the Greig Garden. We've attached a link to the video so that you can check it out at [Shaw Spotlight feature on Greig Rhododendron Species Garden](#)



From the Book Shelf by June Bouchard

Some of you might remember Connie Thompson who was an NRS member in the 1990's. Connie currently lives in Nanoose Bay and has become an avid grower of dahlias. She has just published this very informative book on how to grow dahlias. Here's a summary from Google Books:

"If you're interested in growing dahlias, you will find everything you need in these pages. Connie Thompson has 30 years of experience in everything dahlias, from growing to showing to selling her tubers. After years of educating others through her Facebook pages, she has now brought her wealth of knowledge together in this easy-to-follow guide. Connie's Dahlias will help newer growers find their way with these wonderful flowers.



For every climate zone, she teaches readers how to get flower beds ready, buy the right dahlia tubers, successfully plant them, and get them through their first summer. Learn how to make cuttings to increase your stock, deal with pests, and even join a Dahlia Society to gain expert help for all your many questions. Find your way to floral success with Connie at your side."

Awful Symmetry?... by Jan Moles

Nest is at the bottom of our garden in a large maple tree. Picture taken by me, but insert is picture of the hornet taken from the internet as I could not get a really clear one.

Size is approximately 14" long by 10" wide, and if anything, it has got bigger in this last month. We first noticed it mid-July and the insects have not bothered us at all. Cannot believe how well it is attached to the tree branch. The nest is very active.

Liz and I decided not to get rid of the nest as we are amazed by the beauty and intricacy of it and did not want to destroy it. So did some searching to see if it was likely to cause us a problem – here's some info from the internet:

How Dangerous Is a Whitefaced/Baldfaced Hornet? by Justine Harrington

The bald-faced hornet (*Dolichovespula maculata*) isn't actually a hornet at all – it's technically part of the yellow jacket family. Bald-faced hornets are social creatures that live in huge, distinctive-looking nests and help control garden pests by feeding insects to their young. They can become angry and sting when provoked, but it's possible (and preferable) to live in harmony with these helpful bugs.



Facts About Bald Faced Hornets

The bald-faced hornet is native to North America, and it can be found in most of the 48 contiguous states and D.C., as well as throughout Canada and Alaska. It's a stout-bodied insect that's distinguished by its black-and-white striping and stark ivory-white markings on the face. Hornets live in large colonies that typically comprise 200 to 400 workers, plus the queen.

Their nests attract attention because of their size and shape. In the springtime, the queen collects cellulose from old wood, chews the wood (while adding her own saliva) and then uses this papery paste to build the nest. When completed, bald-faced hornet nests are the size of a football or basketball.

Hornets usually choose to make their nests in bushes, shrubbery or high in the canopy of a tree, although they may decide to live under the eaves of buildings. Hornets rarely sting unless the colony is disturbed, and it's usually in your best interests, as a home gardener, to have a colony of hornets nearby.

Bald Faced Hornets: Dangerous or Beneficial?

Bald faced hornets are an incredibly beneficial insect to have around. They nourish their larvae with insects, which means they help control nearly all types of garden pests, and they help pollinate plants.

Unfortunately, when they're provoked or if they feel threatened, bald-faced hornets can become aggressive and sting. Particularly if you're allergic to hornet stings, you may want to learn about organic ways you can deter hornets from making their home in or near your home – without harming them, in consideration of their positive environmental impact.

Natural Prevention and Removal Methods There's no need to use a chemical-laced spray to kill a bald-faced hornet, and in fact, it's best to leave a hornet nest alone. Not only is it dangerous to try to remove a hornet's nest without

professional help, but hornets are also beneficial insects that provide pest control. In short, they're useful bugs to have around, provided that you stay out of harm's way.

If you do want to prevent hornets from constructing their nests near your home, here are some all-natural ways to do so:

- Apply peppermint oil or a clove-geranium-lemongrass oil blend to places on the outside of your home where hornets like to build nests, such as under porch roofs and eaves. Mix a few drops of either type of oil with water and dish soap in a spray bottle, and lightly coat each area.
- Patch up cracks and holes in your home. Hornets love to live inside tiny cracks around the edges of siding and where power lines enter the house or in any other small crevices.
- Remove food sources from your home. Hornets may try to feed on food left outdoors, open containers with pet food or compost piles, so be sure to take food (especially sugary drinks!) inside and seal off open containers.

Finally, if you're dead-set on removing the hornet's nest from your home, the best way to kill bald-faced hornets may be through a simple application of soap and water. Mix about 2 tablespoons of dish soap in a spray bottle filled with water, and spray this mixture onto the nest – from a safe distance, of course. **(Editors note: an extremely safe distance might be a good idea here)**

A few more late summer photos from Dick & Ann Beamish's garden



*O sweet September rain!
I hear it fall upon the garden beds,
Freshening the blossoms which begin to
wane...
~Mortimer Collins, "Rain in September"*



*Welcome to Fall Everyone!
See you at Beban Park Community
Garden on September 9th! ☺*