



# The Rhodomentum

## Nanaimo Rhododendron Society Newsletter



February 2023



### President's Message

Dear NRS members,  
Well, Christmas is behind us and all the snow we received is long gone. The mild temperatures and longer days are sure to have us thinking of our gardens for 2023. It might be new plants you are looking to acquire, or new garden beds for your existing potted plants, or perhaps, it's just to do some pruning and cleaning up. Garden centres are beginning to add to their plant inventory. I personally receive email updates from Phoenix Perennials of their new plant additions.

This is also the time of year I anxiously anticipate the Spring catalog release of plants from the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden. If you read my "Plant of the Month" newsletter feature, you know many of my rhododendrons are from this fine organization.

Rarely mentioned is our executive group meetings, but we recently had a good one, with full attendance. We could barely contain it to the two-hour time allotment. We were also joined by a few guests. Special thanks to Gaylle and Allen McRae for hosting it.

We have arranged to have a booth at Nanaimo's Seedy Sunday to draw interest to our club, so come by and say hello to your fellow members on Sunday, March 5<sup>th</sup>. (See p.3 for further details)

The other topic discussed is a potential bus tour, either to interesting North Island destinations or South Island ones. It would be a date sometime in May, either before or after our annual plant sale. Before we can proceed with its planning, we need to know if this is something you would like to do? **So please email me at**

[rondsutton58@gmail.com](mailto:rondsutton58@gmail.com) **if interested, and your preference for tour direction, nurseries, garden centres and gardens you would like to visit.**

We can only proceed if we have enough interest. If you have been on a bus tour before, share what you enjoyed about it. The last general meeting had more than 30 members in attendance to enjoy Linda Derkach's splendid talk on "Garden Sense of a Changing Climate".

The next general meeting on **February 9th**, will have **Allison McCabe** giving a talk on **"Invasive Species in the Vancouver Island Garden – Identification, Management, and Removal."**

I hope to see you there.

Ron Sutton,  
NRS President & Treasurer

OUR EXECUTIVE		
<b>President</b>	Ron Sutton	416-951-1373
<b>Vice President</b>	Chris Southwick	390-3415
<b>Past President</b>	Rosina Schmidt	758-7589
<b>Secretary</b>	Deborah Francis	
<b>Treasurer</b>	Ron Sutton	416-951-1373
<b>Directors:</b>		
Margaret Cadwaladr	585-6046	
Dorothee Kieser	390-4136	
Paul Lawry	816-2370	
Arthur Lightburn	468-7516	
Gaylle McRae	758-7589	
<b>COMMITTEE CHAIRS:</b>		
Advertising	Margaret Cadwaladr	
Library	Ann Beamish / Gaylle McRae	
Newsletter	June Bouchard / John Deniseger	
Membership	Jan Moles	
Program	by Committee	
Raffle	Val Harvey	
Social	Deborah Francis	
Bargain Table	Reinhold Gorgosilich	
Website	Deborah Francis/Rosina Schmidt	
Bus Tour	David & Joyce Mitchell	
Sunshine	Wanda Brenton	
Propagation	Rosina Schmidt	
Hailey Grove	Deborah Francis	
Show and Sale	Jan Moles and Rosina Schmidt	
Nanaimo Rhododendron Society		
Box 241, #101-5170 Dunster Road		
Nanaimo, BC V9T 6M4		
Website: <a href="http://nanaimorhodos.ca">nanaimorhodos.ca</a>		

**Our next meeting - Thursday, February 9<sup>th</sup>, at 7:30**

*Invasive Species in the Vancouver Island Garden - Identification, Management, and Removal*

**with Allison McCabe at Beban Park Social Center**

***Our Program for February:  
Invasive Species in the Vancouver Island Garden - Identification,  
Management, and Removal*** with Allison McCabe BSc, MLWS, ATAg



Allison will discuss a range of invasive plants found commonly in Vancouver Island gardens: Himalayan blackberry, English ivy, and Spurge laurel (to name a few!). She will explain how to identify them and how to stop their spread by using species-specific removal techniques and responsible horticultural practices.

Based in Vancouver, Allison is the Senior Lead of outreach at the Invasive Species Council of BC. She works mainly with the PlantWise program, which aims to reduce the use of invasive ornamental plants in gardens and the retail industry.

She also teaches horticulture part-time at UBC and is an avid vegetable gardener in her spare time.

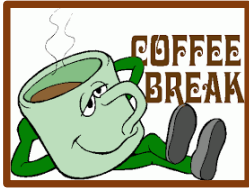
## NRS UPCOMING PROGRAM

Our club’s program committee (Chris Southwick, Dorothee Kieser, and John Deniseger) have been busy. Working together, they have continued to fill in our calendar with great speakers on interesting topics.

Make sure to mark those dates on your calendar!



Date	Speaker	Topic
February 9, 2023	Allison McCabe	Invasive Species in the Vancouver Island Garden – Identification, Management, and Removal
March 9, 2023	Scott Wiskerke	Pruning Rhododendrons
March 18, 2023	Scott Wiskerke – at Chris Southwick’s garden – time TBA	Pruning Demonstration
April 13, 2023	John Deniseger	Why I Grow Rhodos
May 11, 2023	Garth Wedemire	Finnerty Gardens Gems Over the Last Decade



**PLEASE NOTE:**

**Goodies for February meeting - with thanks:  
Dorothee Kieser, Chris Southwick, April Johnston**

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**Twigs and Stems: Calendar of Other Upcoming Events:**

**Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society:** *“Healthy Soil: if your soil could talk, what would it say?”* with Tamara Dinter; Qualicum Beach Civic Center, Wednesday, February 8th, 7:30pm

**North Island Rhododendron Society:** *“Gardens of Scotland”* with Sean Rafferty; Comox United Church Hall, Tuesday, February 14th, 7:30 pm. Please let them know if you plan on attending.

**Victoria Rhododendron Society:** *“Crevice Gardens”* with Paul Spriggs; Glendale Gardens, Thursday, February 2nd, 7:30pm

**Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society:** St. John’s Anglican Church Hall 486 Jubilee Street, Duncan. Wednesday, February 1st, 7:30 pm

**Milner Gardens and Woodland:** reopening February 10th. Check the Milner website for details: [Milner Garden Events](#)



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



**Mark your Calendar** – Seedy Saturday in Qualicum Beach is back on February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Check [here](#) for further details!

**ALSO**

**Nanaimo’s “Seedy Sunday 2023” will be on March 5th from 10am-3pm at the Beban Park Centennial Building.** The NRS has booked a table to promote interest in our club - please email Rosina at [rosinatschmidt@gmail.com](mailto:rosinatschmidt@gmail.com) if interested in volunteering on that day. Or drop by just to say hello! Click [here](#) to know more.

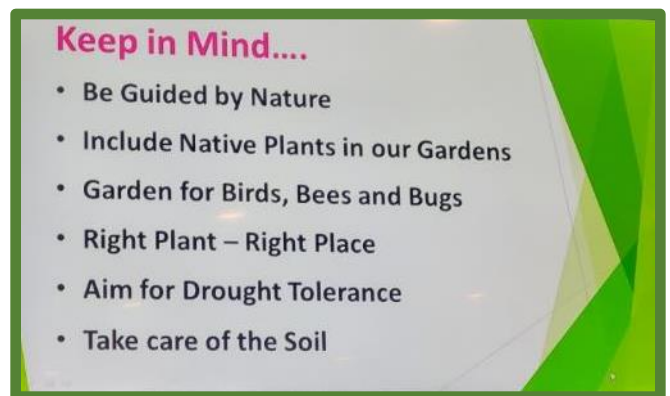
## *A look back at our January meeting:*

Our speaker, Linda Derkach, gave us a presentation full of information on climate change and our gardens. She showed us that there are many things that we can do to make our gardens more resilient. We can still grow the plants we love, including our rhododendrons. However, we may need to make some changes to help our gardens deal with the instability of increasing extremes of our climate: heat domes, prolonged droughts, heavy rain and flooding, wind, and cold winter weather. As gardeners, we all have a role to play in limiting our water consumption through planting trees to create more shade and microclimates, mulching, planting “the right plant in the right place”, and the use of drought tolerant plants. We can choose plants and techniques that support pollinators, our bird populations, and beneficial insects.

Linda also talked about a new initiative known as “Homegrown National Parks,” which is a grassroots call-to-action to regenerate biodiversity and ecosystem function by planting native plants and creating new ecological networks. It is about the collective effort of individual homeowners like us to plant more native plants and remove more invasive plants. It is through the small efforts of the many that collectively we can make a huge difference. No one is asking you to remove all of your rhododendrons. 😊 This is about realizing that as gardeners and stewards of the land, we are connected to nature.



Check their website for more information on how to do your part and join the effort to create “Homegrown National Parks.” It’s an idea whose time has come! [Homegrown National Parks](#)



*February is merely as long as is needed to pass the time until March. ~J. R. Stockton*

## Linda also gave us a list of resources including nurseries and websites:

### Vancouver Island

#### Streamside Native Plants

7455 Island Hwy. West  
Bowser V0R 1G0  
250-757-9999  
Toll Free 1-877-570-3138

#### Satinflower Nurseries

741 Haliburton Road  
Victoria V8Y 1H7

#### NALT Natural Abundance

##### Native Plant Nursery

3145 Frost Road  
Nanaimo (Cassidy)

#### Fraser's Thimble Farm

175 Arbutus Road  
Salt Spring Island  
250-537-5788

#### Russell Nursery

C1370 Wain Rd  
North Saanich, BC  
V8L 5V1

1 (250) 656-0384

[russellnursery@telus.net](mailto:russellnursery@telus.net)

#### Wildwood Outdoor Living Centre

4660 Elk Lake Dr,  
Victoria, BC V8Z 5M1

#### Stellata Plants

<https://stellataplants.com/contact> Saanichton  
BCSpecializes in water tolerant plants

### Vancouver

#### Shop in the Garden

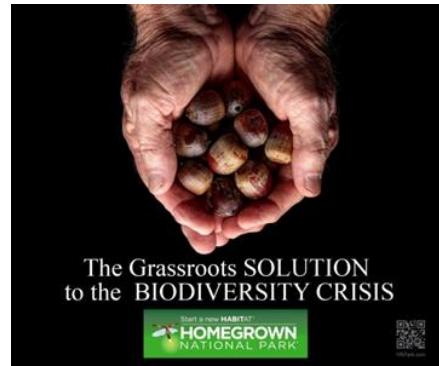
UBC Botanical Garden  
6804 Southwest Marine Dr., Vancouver  
604-822-4529

[www.botanicalgarden.ubc.ca](http://www.botanicalgarden.ubc.ca)

*Good selection*

### Websites:

#### Homegrown National Park



<https://homegrownnationalpark.org>

#### Jelitto Perennial Seeds, Germany.

[www.jelitto.com](http://www.jelitto.com)

*Carry seed for many BC natives and the native plants commonly used in naturalistic plant design like Oudolf's gardens.*

#### Northwest Meadows Apes

Port Townsend

[www.northwestmeadowsapes.com](http://www.northwestmeadowsapes.com)

*Sells excellent native plant seed & seed mixes for BC wildflowers & lawn alternative*

## Hailey Rhododendron Grove Work Bee ~ Bowen Park

By Deborah Francis, coordinator



Holly and Ivy in the Hailey Rhododendron Garden, sounds idyllic but it is not.

**We need your help to assist in removing invasive species from Hailey Grove at Bowen Park. It fits perfectly with this month's meeting topic! Come and be part of the solution! 😊**

The next monthly work bee will be held on **Tuesday, February 14<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm**. If you can spare a little or a lot of time, all are welcome to spend some time in the rhododendron garden. Weather permitting.

### Are you having trouble receiving the newsletter via e-mail?

It has come to our attention that NRS members with Shaw e-mail addresses (including ourselves) may be having trouble receiving NRS group e-mails. It is our understanding that a security filtering program for Shaw may be causing delays. We suggest checking your SPAM folder – or you may wish to reach out to Shaw to inquire about filter settings for your account. Remember that the newsletter and general club information is also found on the NRS website at:

<http://nanaimorhodos.ca/>

Over the last few months, we have had new members joining us, bringing their enthusiasm, knowledge, and smiles to our club!!! 😊 Warm welcome to the following new members:



- D'Arcy Boulton
- Ione Brown
- April Johnston
- Laura-Jean Kelly
- Dana Mitic



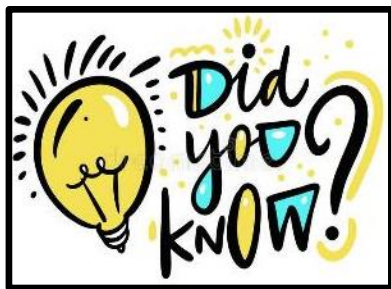
# NRS Propagation Committee report – by Rosina Schmidt



Back on the 23rd of September 2022, NRS propagators planted 300 rhodo cuttings at the VIU G.R. Paine Centre, and they are delighted to report that by now, most of the cuttings have grown roots! Come June 2023, they will be replanted into 1-gallon pots and tended from then on with lots of TLC, in some of our members' gardens. Our great thanks to the NRS propagating group for their hard work and devotion!



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## Membership pays!!!

Jan Moles, our membership chair, has been doing some digging (she is a gardener after all 😊!). Did you know that with your valid NRS membership card, you can get various discounts at local businesses such as: Buckerfields, Arrowsmith Greenhouses, Russell Farm Market & Garden Centre. Your NRS membership will also get you a discount on a membership at Milner which in turn gives you a discount at the Milner nursery. Watch this space in future newsletters as Jan will be updating it monthly.

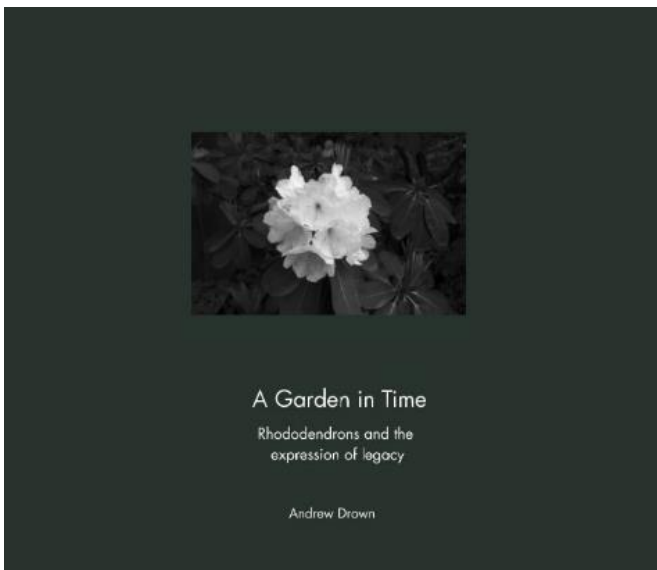


## NRS Library by June Bouchard

If you're new to the club, you may not know that the Nanaimo Rhododendron Society has a wonderful library full of great titles related to gardening – not only about rhododendrons but also about companion plants, trees, gardens from around the world, landscape design, and so much more. All those resources are available to you as part of your membership – come and browse the collection next time you come to a meeting – the library is located in the cupboard at the front of the room. Alternately, you can now check the library inventory on the [NRS website](#) as our web master Rosina has just downloaded it – click on “Information” and scroll down to the very bottom under “Internal Information” or [click here](#). There are truly many interesting books that one does not spot easily while looking into the cabinet. **Our thanks to members Ann Beamish and Gayle McRae who have compiled the latest inventory – they also catalog and maintain our collection.**

## New to our library: *A Garden in Time: Rhododendrons and the Expression of Legacy* by Andrew Drown

We are fortunate to now have this beautiful book in the NRS library – it has been donated by long-time NRS member Jean Greig, who is Chris Southwick's mother, as well as the author's grand-mother. Thank you, Jean!



At our November meeting, Chris Southwick shared this beautiful and very special new book with us which was authored by her nephew, Andrew Drown.

### From Andrew:

*“The culmination of a 2-year project focused on my family's love for Rhododendrons and the legacy left by my great grandmother, Mary Greig. The book features black and white and colour garden landscapes, studio plant portraits, as well as some original poetry and writing.”*

You can purchase a copy if you [click here](#). Or you can borrow it from our library. And if you want to see more of Andrew's beautiful photography or check his portfolio, [click here](#).

*If you have a garden and a library you have everything you need* - Marcus Tullius Cicero





## *Plant of the Month* by Ron Sutton

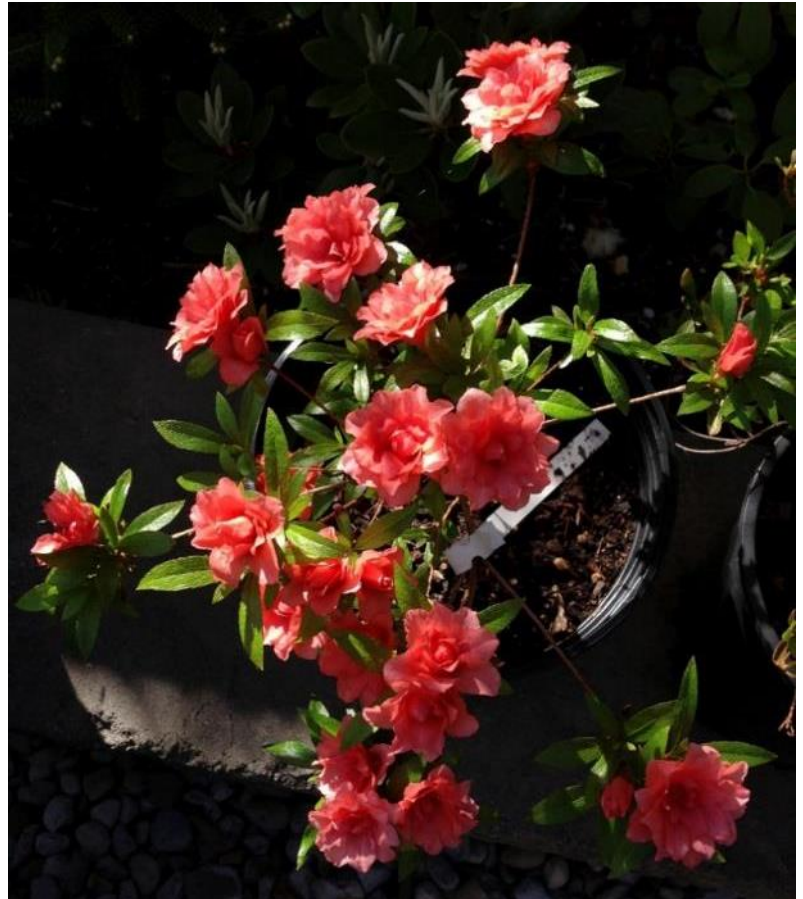
### ***Rhododendron indicum balsaminiflora***

This species azalea is from the mountains of Japan. It has shiny green lanceolate shaped leaves to 1.5 inches long. The double reddish orange flowers, 2-2.5 inches wide, bloom in late May.

It forms a dense shrub of 3 feet wide by 1.5 feet high in 10 years and is hardy to USDA zone 7 or -18°C It can handle full sun, but isn't drought tolerant.

I have been posting about plants I am currently growing, but this is one I used to have in my Ontario, USDA zone 6, garden. It was purchased from Greer Garden's mail order business. I had two of these plants, one in the garden and one in a pot. The one in the garden could handle the Ontario winter, but wouldn't flower. Harold Greer figured winter was too cold for it to form flowers. So, I ordered another one and kept it potted, and protected in the garage for the winter. It is the one in the photo, and as you can see, it did flower.

This plant is very difficult to find, and I am trying to reacquire one for my island garden.



## **Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society Bus Tour**

MARS is organizing a 2-day bus tour on May 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, which will include gardens from Nanoose, south through Nanaimo, the Cowichan Valley and Victoria. The trip will also include a BBQ at Ken and Madeline Webb's and a couple of plant buying opportunities. The cost is \$50 for MARS members, \$90 for non-members plus approximately \$200 for hotel accommodation (based on 2 people sharing). If you're interested in joining the tour, or get on the waiting list, please contact Linda Derkach for further information at [lindaderkach@shaw.ca](mailto:lindaderkach@shaw.ca)



*“February is the shortest month, so if you're having a miserable month, try to schedule it for February.”*  
- Lemony Snickett

## Far Reaches Farm zoom talk – organized by ARS District 1

On Thursday February 23, 2023 7:30pm – the zoom link will be sent out as we get closer to the date

Kelly Dodson and Sue Milliken will give a talk on interesting and rare companion plants for our rhododendron gardens.

### Rare Companion Plants at Far Reaches Botanical Conservancy

A look at uncommon to very rare introductions in the FRBC collection which are suitable to accompany Rhododendrons in the woodland garden. Many of these were acquired on joint collecting trips with our good friend, whom you may have heard of, Steve Hootman. Kidding of course! There will be a bit of plant hunting in the wild as well as seeing how these are performing for us in the Far Reaches of Port Townsend, Washington.

### Their bio...

Kelly and Sue have spent their lives learning and working with plants in nurseries, botanic gardens and on plant hunting expeditions. They are owners of Far Reaches Farm whose extensive collection of plants is spectacularly unfocused. The nursery has been featured in magazines such as Pacific Horticulture, Horticulture, Martha Stewart Living and in 2021, mentioned in the New York Times as “arguably the best nursery in the country for cool-climate perennials” and in Gardens Illustrated as “one of the best nurseries in the world.” In addition, they are contributing editors for Fine Gardening magazine. They are also founding directors of Far Reaches Botanical Conservancy, a non-profit whose mission is the acquisition and conservation of vulnerable plants of wild and cultivated origin that are new or rare in North America. Visit them at [www.farreachesfarm.com](http://www.farreachesfarm.com) or [www.farreachesbotanicalconservancy.org](http://www.farreachesbotanicalconservancy.org)



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## Vancouver Island Master Gardeners Association “Spring Education Day” Vegetable Gardening, the Good, the Bad and the Ugly Saturday, March 11<sup>th</sup> at Nanoose Place

- The day will include a panel of VIMGA Master Gardeners from their four districts who will discuss vegetable gardening (with a Q & A to follow).
- There will also be a presentation from Bonnie Zand. Many of you will remember Bonnie from our “Fall into Gardening” event in October, where she gave an excellent presentation! Bonnie is the owner of Bonnie’s Bugs IPM, a private consulting company working with farmers to manage insect pests on Vancouver Island. She is currently running the Vancouver Island Pests, Pollinators and Beneficials Project.
- Bonnie holds a BSc in biology from UVic, is a board member of the Native Bee Society of BC and is part of the recovery implementation group for the endangered Taylor’s checkerspot butterfly. Bonnie is also the BC instructor for the Master Melittologist program. In her spare time, she likes to look for interesting native bees and other insects, raise mason bees, garden with native plants, and instill a love of plants in her five-year-old daughter.



# February Gardening Calendar By Rosina Schmidt

Hello to the new gardening season. At Departure Bay at the time of this writing, the Hellebore buds are stretching their heads out of the mulch and so are the daffodils. It's a delightful time of expectation for our gardens to come back to life.



- **Rhodos:** sprinkle 10-6-4 granular fertilizers around your young plants and around those that could use some additional booster. Enjoy the very early trusses.
- **Orchard Bees:** Set nests outside. Refrigerate the cocoons until released.
- **General Gardening:** Prune fruit trees. Spray with dormant oil/lime sulphur spray. Spread lime around alkaline-loving plants such as clematis, lilacs, and peonies. Prune dormant trees, shrubs, and conifers. Treat hydrangeas with aluminum sulphate for bluer shades or lime for pink shades. Transplant dormant plants using liquid root booster. Plant extras into 1-gallon pots for NRS' May Plant Sale.
- Remember:
  - When **Forsythia** is blooming – plant radishes.
  - When the **apple trees and lilacs** are blooming, plant squash, cucumber, and beans.
  - Wait for planting the **tomatoes** until the Spireas are blooming.

Happy Gardening,  
Rosina

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*Happy  
Valentine's Day  
Everyone!*

*Looking forward  
to seeing you at  
our February  
Meeting!*