



The Rhodomentum

Nanaimo Rhododendron Society Newsletter



March 2024



President's Message

Hi Everyone,

At time of writing this message, the weather was good enough to get some much-needed yard work done. Comfortable temperatures with no bugs and or sunscreen needed. The milder than average temperatures have some rhododendrons trying to bloom earlier, and are now susceptible to frost damage with the colder temperatures moving in.

Our last meeting saw a good turnout of 35 members and guests to enjoy the owners of Streamside Native Plant, Jim and Cyndi, talk about their favourite native plants. They also brought with them some plants for sale for members to purchase.

We welcome a new member couple, Steven Poschner and Patricia Maile. Thank you for joining us, we look forward to getting to know you.

In other news, the NRS has given a \$500.00 donation to VIU for a student bursary. We have recently paid for the rental of the plant sale hall and our liability insurance.

Chris Southwick is putting together a basket of interesting items for the Bellingham Rhododendron Conference. It will represent our club and be raffled off. All the other chapters are doing this. If you have anything that you would like to contribute, contact Chris or bring to the next meeting – the theme is Vancouver Island. (See p. 10)

The NRS will be promoting our club at our Seedy Sunday table on March 3. (See p. 9)

A reminder that there is a special Zoom talk by Ken Cox on March 9 – mark your calendars. Our next meeting on March 14 will feature a city Horticulturalist talking about the challenges of city gardening. Lastly, there is a good selection of rhododendrons that were recently delivered to Garden Works. I bought a few.

Ron

OUR EXECUTIVE

President	Ron Sutton	416-951-1373
Vice President	Dorothee Kieser	390-4136
Past President	Rosina Schmidt	751-3386
Secretary	Deborah Francis	
Treasurer	Ron Sutton	416-951-1373

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Margaret Cadwaladr	585-6046
Arthur Lightburn	468-7516
Gayle McRae	758-7589
Krystyna Sosulski	729-0948
Chris Southwick	616-2742

COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

Advertising	Margaret Cadwaladr
Library	Ann Beamish / Gayle McRae
Newsletter	June Bouchard / John Deniseger
Membership	Krystyna Sosulski
Program	by Committee
Raffle	Val Harvey
Sunshine/Coffee	Wanda Brenton
Bargain Table	Reinhold Gorgosilich
Website	Deborah Francis/Rosina Schmidt
Bus Tour	
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: nanaimorhodos.ca

Our next meeting – Thursday, March 14th, at 7:30 pm

“Ups and Downs of City Gardeners”

With Susan Zaric

At Beban Park Social Centre

Our Program for March - "Ups and Downs of City Gardeners" with Susan Zaric

Susan Zaric, ISA Certified Arborist and Certified Tree Risk Assessor, is the Horticulture and Arboriculture Supervisor for the Nanaimo Parks Department where she has worked for 15 years. In her spare time, she likes to garden and spend time outdoors with her son.



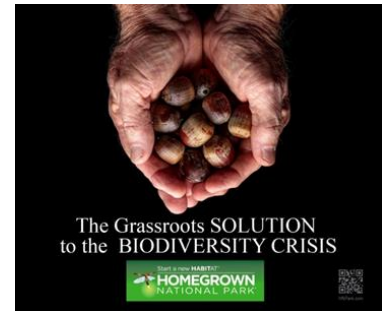
"I'm going to do an informal talk about myself and the Horticulture crew, along with details about our work and some of our challenges. I thought I'd discuss our work during the growing season and how we manage that."



Thank you to Chris Southwick and Gayle McRae for bringing goodies to our upcoming March meeting.



Homegrown National Park is a movement that was included in the presentation by Cyndi and Jim, last month's speakers. It is a bottom-up call-to-action to restore some of the habitat in our own gardens and backyards to support biodiversity, pollinators, beneficial insects.... Collectively, we can all make a difference by creating something that is far greater than the sum of its parts.



Check out the website <https://homegrownnationalpark.org/>

The Benefits of Joining the NRS and the ARS

Inspired by ARS president, Linda Derkach, we've put together a 2 page document outlining the benefits of joining our club and the ARS. The intent is to use it to create posters and handouts which we can use at club events such as our plant sale and Seedy Sunday. **You'll find it on pages 7-8**, and of course on the [NRS website](#) . It really made us realize just how active our club is!

Looking Back at Our Last Meeting...

At our February 8th meeting, we welcomed Cyndi Hampton and Jim Roberts from Streamside Native Plants Nursery. It was an excellent presentation highlighting possible ways to integrate native plants into our gardens. They shared a lot of pertinent information as well as beautiful photos with us. Please see below for planting ideas.



Native Plants for Sunny Edges

- Douglas Aster / *Aster douglasii*
- Blue-eyed Grass / *Sisyrinchium angustifolium*
- Great Camas / *Camassia leichtlinii*
- Canada Goldenrod / *Solidago canadensis*
- Pearly Everlasting / *Anaphalis margaritacea*
- Broadleaf Stonecrop / *Sedum spathulifolium*
- Kinnickinnick / *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi**
- Beach Strawberry / *Fragaria chiloensis*
- Red Flowering Currant / *Ribes sanguineum**
- Red Osier Dogwood / *Cornus stolonifera*
- Blue Elderberry / *Sambucus cerulea*
- Red Elderberry / *Sambucus racemose*
- Evergreen Euckleberry / *Vaccinium ovatum*
- June Plum / *Oemleria cerasiformis**
- Mock Orange / *Philadelphus lewisii*
- Tall Oregon Grape (*Mahonia aquifolium*)*



Dicentra formosa



Fritillaria lanceolata

Native plants for shadier areas

- Pacific Bleeding Heart / *Dicentra Formosa*
- Western Red Columbine / *Aquilegia Formosa*
- Woodland Strawberry / *Fragaria vesca*
- Baldhip Rose / *Rosa gymnocarpa*
- Chocolate Lily (*Fritillaria lanceolata*)
- Western Trillium (*Trillium ovatum*)
- Fawn Lilies (*Erythronium spp.*)
- Violets (*Viola spp.*)

EARLY BLOOMERS

- Red Flowering Currant / *Ribes sanguineum*
- June Plum / *Oemleria cerasiformis*
- Kinnickinnick / *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*
- Tall Oregon Grape (*Mahonia aquifolium*)

Find out more here:

<https://www.streamsidenativeplants.com/>



Anaphalis margaritacea



NRS Upcoming Program for the rest of the Year:

- **April:** “Finnerty Gardens” with Garth Wedemire
- **May:** “Plans for Milner Rhododendron Expansion” with Geoff Ball, Jim Cadwaladr and John Deniseger
- **June:** End of Year Party! 😊

Twigs and Stems: Calendar of Other Upcoming Events:

Milner Gardens and Woodland: Open Fridays and Saturdays, from 11:00 am to 3:30 pm, **beginning February 2nd, 2024 thru March.** For details, check the [Milner Website](#)

North Island Rhododendron Society: “TBA”, Comox United Church Hall, Tuesday, March 12th at 7:30.

Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society: “Panel of Experts, Plant Culture Roundtable”, Qualicum Beach Civic Center, Wednesday, March 13th, 7:30pm

Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society: “TBA” with Glen Jamieson, Wednesday, March 6th, at The Hub in Duncan.

Victoria Rhododendron Society: “*Growing Citrus on Vancouver Island*” with Bob Duncan - Couvelier Pavilion, Glendale Gardens, 505 Quayle Rd, Saanich, Thursday, March 7th, 7:30pm

Seedy Sunday in Nanaimo: Sunday, March 3rd, 2024 - **The NRS will be present at this event – volunteers will be needed –**

We are pleased to announce that a number of new people have joined the NRS in the past few months. A very warm welcome to the following people:

- Shirley Milligan
- Jennifer McKee
- David Smith
- Kathy and Guy Loyer
- Tracey Maile
- Steve Poschner



Hailey Rhododendron Grove Work Bee ~ Bowen Park

By Deborah Francis, coordinator

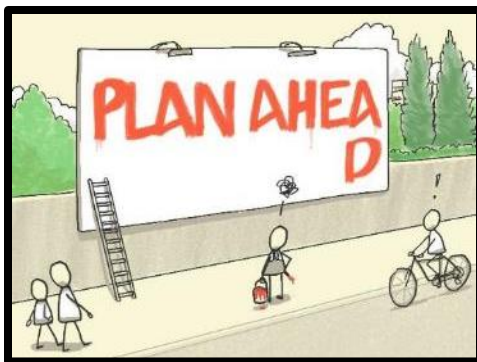


You know that Spring is just around the corner when the rhododendron buds are forming and the daffodils are sprouting. Thank you to the six garden warriors that made up the Hailey Grove February work bee. Winter storms and drought conditions created much detritus requiring a heavy focus on debris removal. It was a beautiful day and much fun was had by all.

Our March work bee will take place on March 12th from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm. The garden will be in bloom and everyone is welcome – parking at the tennis courts. Bring good cheer, your gardening gloves, and a snack. The City will provide gardening tools.

Hope to see you there! Come and be part of the fun! 😊





Our annual plant sale is coming up on Saturday, May 11th. With spring quickly approaching (honest! 😊), you will soon be subdividing perennials – please reserve/pot some up for our Plant Sale table at the May 11th Show and Sale.

Shadehouse at Milner

We've set up a weekly maintenance schedule in cooperation with MARS members – we alternate weeks. Thank you to everyone who signed up to help out. **If you'd like to join the team, please see John or Chris.**

REMINDER:

Shadehouse Checking Crew for the upcoming months...

Week of:		
March 11th	Dorothee Kieser	Ione Brown
March 25th	Ann Beamish	Dick Beamish
April 8th	Rosina Schmidt	
April 22nd	Dorothee Kieser	

Propagation News By Rosina Schmidt

The NRS Propagators have been busy fertilizing our cuttings at the Paine greenhouse with a liquid fertiliser and at Milner's Gardens with granular rhodo fertilizer. The cuttings in the greenhouse will be fertilized again 4 weeks later. (Propagation photos, featuring Ione Brown and David Smith, are by Rosina.)



The photo on the left shows our 2022 cuttings at the shadehouse as seen today (February 29th), those on the left side of the blue hose. The ones on the right side are a collection of donations and previous years cuttings, which will be repotted for the May 2024 sale.



Nanaimo Rhododendron Society (NRS) and the American Rhododendron Society (ARS) – Locally, Regionally and Internationally



We have much to offer!

At the Local Level

- **Club meetings** (incl. free coffee, tea, raffles) with great local and international speakers to learn about inspiring gardens & gardeners, care and culture of rhodos & other plants, soil, mulch, pollinators, pests & diseases and more...



- **Plant sales** with access to a wide range of species and hybrid rhododendrons.



- **Fun and friendship** with other passionate gardeners.



- **Fun Local Events**



- **Garden Tours & Bus Tours**



- **Learn Hands-on skills** such as propagation, pruning, bonsai, container gardening...



- **Informative newsletter and website** <http://nanaimorhodos.ca/>

- **Bowen Park Hailey Rhododendron Grove care and maintenance**



- We award an **annual bursary** to a deserving VIU horticultural program student and donate to Loaves and Fishes.

At the Regional Level

Building partnerships within the regional gardening community to:

- Establish the Greig Rhododendron Species Garden at Milner Gardens and Woodland.



- Organize and create the “Fall into Gardening” event every 2 years.



- Work with Vancouver Island University to propagate Rhododendrons.

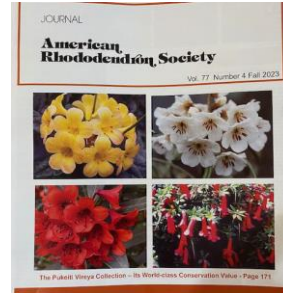


- Work with the Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society and Milner Gardens and Woodland to build a shared shadehouse and nursery for plant propagation.



The benefits of joining the ARS

- **Quarterly Journal** with valuable plant and Society information



- **Seed Exchange** Program
- **World Class Website** with information on the care and culture of rhododendrons, a Plant Database, activities, events
www.rhododendron.org
- **Internationally renowned speakers and tours of World-Famous Gardens** during conventions or conferences.



All photos taken by various NRS members.

Coming up in our gardening community:

Nanaimo Seedy Sunday!



Don't miss it – Sunday, March 3rd at NDSS!

It includes educational workshops, Master Gardeners, displays and 45 + vendors selling plants and seeds of all types including heritage and heirloom seeds. **Make sure to check out the Nanaimo Rhododendron Society table!**

[Click here](#) for full details.

Master Gardeners Spring Seminar!



Too hot. Too dry. Too cold. What's a gardener to do? Our climate is changing and our gardens are changing with it. What practical steps can we take to help our gardens thrive and keep our love of gardening alive? We have a great line-up of speakers to offer you practical and personal advice to help you navigate these changes. [Details here](#)

Tickets are \$60 online to attend in person, includes recordings for one month viewing. \$70 at the door. Recordings Only \$35 for one month of viewing. To Register: Click [HERE](#)

Details: Sunday March 24th, 2024 9am to 3pm at the Michael J Fox Theatre, Burnaby

Stay connected - check our web page - new things added regularly!

<http://nanaimorhodos.ca/>

Did you know??? We are now on Facebook as the Nanaimo Rhododendron Society. Upcoming events will be posted there and members will be able to add photographs or items of interest to members. (Thank you, Margaret, for setting that up!)

Plant of the Month by Ron Sutton

Rhododendron huanum

This seldom seen species rhododendron is found in south west China in the following areas: Chongqing, Guizhou, Sichuan and Yunnan.

The spelling of this rhododendron's name is often seen with an "i" in the name, 'huianum', which is incorrect. According to Steve Hootman, *huanum* is the correct spelling.

Regardless of how the name is spelled, it's a beautiful plant.

Rhododendron huanum has olive green leaves and grows into a 5-foot shrub in ten years. The flowers are a stunning lavender colour and form loose trusses of 12-14 flowers. Equally attractive is the reddish-purple contrasting star shaped calyx of each flower.

Blooming begins on Vancouver Island in late April to early May.

This rhododendron prefers part shade and is listed hardy to 0°F/-18° C

The RSBG occasionally sells this plant. Here is a RSBG link to a great photo and article about this plant. [New: R. huanum – Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden](#)

These photos of our plant in bloom were taken on May 3rd, 2023.





Gift Basket for the ARS Conference:

The organizers of the upcoming ARS Convention in Bellingham are planning a silent auction featuring baskets of goodies. The theme of the Nanaimo Rhododendron Society basket is "Vancouver Island". Please consider donating an item to help fill the basket – keeping in mind "no alcohol per hotel policy". Thanks in advance for your contributions. (Contact Chris Southwick or bring to either the March or April meeting.)



SAVE THE DATE !

ARS 2024 Spring Convention

Bellingham, Washington

May 2-5, 2024

Four Points by Sheraton, Bellingham

Hotel and Conference Center

714 Lakeway Drive, Bellingham, WA, USA, 98229

Phone: +1 360-671-1011

Highlights:

Pre-Tour: May 1: Private Gardens around Seattle

Convention: Tours * Seminars * Workshops * Banquets

Post-Tour: May 5: Gardens around Vancouver, Canada

Time to check your Passport!

Plus:

Plant Sales * Auctions * Raffles * Photo Booth * Poster Session

Help get the message out!

Please forward to friends and gardeners in your community and around the globe.

Visit [ARS 2024](#) for more information and to register.

(Editor's Note: if you haven't been to an ARS Spring Convention for a while or if you've never gone, this may be the time to go! It's only a ferry ride and a short drive away. Check [ARS 2024](#) and the Journal of the American Rhododendron Society for details.)

Rhododendron Glossary...



We're building our very own collection of terms related to rhododendrons, one word at a time. Each month, we'll add a new word or term to the glossary. If you have suggestions that you'd like us to add, please let us know.

This month's word is: Bud Blight (or is it frost damage??)

Sometimes in the spring, just as the much-anticipated flower buds begin to open, we realize we have a number of buds that have turned brown. It can be frustrating and can be a common problem in many of our gardens. This spring, one of our *R. sutchuenense* plants had about 120 flower buds on it. We lost about 110 of them. What's the cause?



Bud blight photo from Oregon State University website

Let's start with bud blight: The following description of this problem is taken straight out of "*Greer's Guidebook to Available Rhododendrons: species and hybrids*" (1996 edition):

"Flower buds turn brown and are covered with black bristles, which are spores from the fungus *Briosia azalea*. Leaf hoppers may act as vectors to spread the fungus. Remove and destroy affected buds. Fungicide applications are not usually necessary." (Ed. Note: we're not sure how common this is in our area.)

Freeze damage: "Factors such as freeze damage (including light freezing when the buds are not dormant), and unknown factors, can cause the buds to brown and fall off. Certain cultivars such as one form of *R. wardii* will often lose most buds even without temperatures low enough to cause damage." From "*Greer's Guidebook to Available Rhododendrons: species and hybrids*" (1996 edition)

From Millais Nurseries website: If the flower buds formed in the autumn, but turned brown during the winter, it suggests that you are growing a too tender variety and they may have been frosted. If the flower buds have turned black, and are covered with spikey black fungal growths, they are probably suffering from bud blast or bud blight.

The photos below are from one of our *R. sutchuenense* plants. On the left is one of the few healthy buds. The other photos show the brown buds. Because there are no black bristles, we suspect that it was caused by the early frost last October when the buds were not yet dormant. Our other *R. sutchuenense* is in a more sheltered location – it hasn't lost a single bud and is about to burst into bloom (both are mature plants - 8 to 10 feet high). Just in case, we picked off and disposed of all brown buds.



Refer to previous issues for

February 2024: **Clone and Grex**

January 2024: **Hammerhead**

December 2023: **Chlorosis**

November 2023's word: **senescence**

October 2023's words: **Elepidote and Lepidote**

September 2023's word: **tomentum**

June 2023's word: **indumentum**

May 2023's word: **truss**



*Looking forward
to seeing you all
on Thursday,
March 14th!*

'R. Len Living' (*R. sutchense* x *R. strigillosum*)

Beautiful photo sent to us by Chris Southwick, taken on February 27th, 2024

"I took this photo this morning – it is a hybrid of Granny's. It has never bloomed so well all at once. There are only a few trusses that are turning to mush. Pretty tough, I'd say!"

(Ed. Note: "Granny" is plants-woman Mary Greig.)