



The Rhodoteller

www.nirs.rhodos.ca



North Island Rhododendron Society

2009/2010 Executive

President

Diana Scott..... 338-0208

Vice-President

Dave Crucq 941-1957

Past President:

Harry Wright..... 338-8345

Secretary

Pauline Thompson..... 339-3423

Treasurer

Dave Godfrey..... 335-0717

Director: Ways & Means

Nadine Boudreau..... 339-0909

Director: Membership

Brian Staton 337-5228

Director: Publicity

Chris Aldred..... 331-0395

Director: Newsletter/Library

Noni Godfrey 335-0717

..... nonigod@shaw.ca

Social Committee:

Marleen Crucq..... 941-1957

Revenue Table Committee:

Louise Casson 334-2331

Sunshine Lady:

Pauline Bonney 339-7594

The club meets at 7:30 p.m
the second Tuesday of each month
(except May through August)
United Church in Comox

Coming Events

1st September 2009 - Executive Meeting 2:00 pm

The executive meeting will be held at the home of Diana and John Scott, 6432 Eagles Drive Courtenay. Drive down Coleman Road, turn left onto Left Road, and Eagles is close to the end. Left on Eagles, their house is on the right hand side and has a push button gate.



8th September 2009 - Regular Monthly Meeting

Propagating Rhododendrons: Cuttings ~Presented by Roberts Smith~

Several members were treated to a tour of Bob and Adela Smith's beautiful and extensive rhododendron garden during the year end wrap up picnic in June. Those that were on the tour will well remember the greenhouse full of small rhododendron plants. Bob has been enjoying the challenge of propagating rhodos by experimenting with cuttings for a year or more now. At our September meeting Bob will show a few photos of some of his more unusual rhodos, talk with us about how he has set up his greenhouse for propagation and explain some of the techniques and changes that he has made over the past year

To end his presentation he will share part of a new DVD that highlights aspects of rhododendron cultivation including propagation and hybridization.





President's View

...by *Diana Scott*

Welcome back everyone! Another busy summer is behind us and I'm sure we're all looking forward to a beautiful fall. John and I missed spring in our garden this year, but we spent a fabulous 2 months on our boat travelling the inlets and fjords from here to Kitimat. The weather was wonderful on the way up, a bit windy and rainy on the way back, but all in all we saw some of the most breathtaking scenery that coastal BC has to offer. My new favourite anchorage is Culpepper Lagoon, which now rivals the awe-inspiring Princess Louisa Inlet. It was wonderful to be away, and wonderful to be home.

After several weeks of 'trriage' in the garden (things certainly grew with enthusiasm between May and July...), I settled in to keeping things alive during the July heat waves. Those above 30 degree weeks put a lot of stress on my garden and it was an ongoing challenge to hand-water my rhodos with our limited water. I hope that with all the extra attention they will have set some very nice buds for next spring!

Your Executive is 'up and running' and we look forward to another excellent year. Once again we have a great group of folks working for the club. Enjoyment is tied closely to participation, so we are always looking for more members to step up and take on a role. This can be something small or large; setting up and taking down chairs at the meetings (oh, SOOO appreciated!), helping in the kitchen, assisting with membership – especially the first few months of the year, offering to set up our next bus tour... the opportunities are endless! Although we look ever-so-efficient, each of us would appreciate having you step forward to help out with our 'portfolios'.

Do you like books? Offer to help Noni and Pauline with the library. Love plants? Louise and Sue could use a hand at the Revenue Table. Sell, smile, sell? Nadine could always use extra folks at the Ways and Means Table! In order to have our coffee and goodies each meeting we need a couple of folks to work closely with Marleen over the next few months with a view to taking over Social when needed. This is just a sample -- there are many more places for folks to participate. Don't sit back - jump in!

Last year, Bob Smith did a short 'educational' for us, and we knew then that we wanted him back for a longer presentation. For those of you who have seen his greenhouse, it's quite the place, and we are looking forward to hearing all about his Rhodo propagation system at our September meeting. See you there!



MEMBER'S NOTES

BY DAVE GOOFREY

Welcome back following our summer hiatus. And what a summer it has been. It started much earlier than the calendar showed, with a glorious stretch of summer-like weather during May and June. Then during July and August we had a couple of scorching hot weeks. Be sure to check out our web site for photo galleries of all our past events.

Several work parties were held during the spring and summer months to help maintain the beauty of our Comox Valley Rhododendron Garden. Dave Crucq, our new garden director, wishes to thank all those members who attended the work parties and helped with all the weeding, dead-heading and general clean up.

In keeping with our second Tuesday evening of the month meetings, a work party was held on July 14th at 6:30 PM. A surprise 26 members attended (a record by some accounts) and most of the deadheading and weeding was finished within an hour, with dessert and a social gathering rounding out the evening.

In celebration of our chapter's 25th anniversary, forty-four members and guests gathered at Adela and Bob Smith's home and garden for a fabulous pot luck dinner on Saturday, June 13th. In addition to our own members, 6 members of the MARS chapter (Ron & Judy McMaster, Art & Susan Lightburn, and Terry & Verna Richmond) travelled north to join us for the occasion. District 1 Alternate Director, Ron McMaster, congratulated our members on the success of our club, and passed along words of encouragement from District Director, Ron Knight, who was unavailable to attend.

Harry Wright, founding member of our chapter back in October 1984, recalled some of the many activities of the club and members, past and present, who have made the chapter an enjoyable experience for himself and others. Harry then cut a special cake, made by Peter and Antje Guertler, which was enjoyed by all in attendance.



Fun activities for the event included a rhodo naming game, where teams of four were to name 25 rhodos beginning with the letter 'S' (for Silver anniversary) in 10 minutes. After all tally sheets were checked, the team of Paul Wurz, Pauline Bonnie, Dorothy Law and Jim Clyde were declared the winners with at least 25 named correctly.



Following the delicious dinner, 16 teams competed in a challenging bean bag toss tournament run by the Godfrey's. The first rounds saw some interesting and comical tosses, but as the field narrowed the teams became more competitive and the scores became much closer. In the final game, Bernie and Gloria Guyader faced off against Dave Crucq and Noni Godfrey. Several ringers by all players kept the game close for the first half, but then Noni & Dave (the other Dave) gradually pulled away with a 23 to 13 win.



Three free rhodo draws were made, with John Vanderhorst, Don Law, and Noni Godfrey holding the winning tickets. Congratulations to all the winners, and a big thank you to the organizing committee of Lois Clyde, Louise Casson and Harry Wright.

A BIG thank you also goes to Adela and Bob Smith for the gracious use of their home and gardens for this special occasion of our 25th anniversary.

Be sure to attend our meetings this fall as we have an

interesting list of guest speakers lined up to both entertain and educate us. Beginning September 8th our own Bob Smith will talk on his method of propagating rhododendron cuttings. On October 13th, Tom Carter of Nanaimo is scheduled to provide a presentation on his annual rhodo treks to Nepal. Then on November 10th, Glen Jamieson of the MARS chapter, and new editor for the ARS Journal, will be speaking to us about his interests in Vireyas.

So if you've been missing your fellow Rhodoholics and need to catch up with how others have been keeping, drop by our usual meeting place at 7 PM on the second Tuesday of the month. Hope to see you at the meetings.



For the benefit of all members (not just those who attend the meetings) I thought we should try to squeeze in a small article on the changes to the photo gallery on our web site....

It has been a busy, hot summer, and as such, it has taken some time to load the Photo Gallery page of our web site with photos of the many events of this past spring and summer. All albums on the gallery page are now complete and available for viewing. Thanks for your patience.

Our web site has been active over the summer months with over 800 visits logged in July, and over 700 each for the months of June and August. The majority of these 'hits' are viewing past issues of our newsletters and the many albums in the Photo Gallery. At the end of August, there are well over 8000 visits (hits) to our web site in the previous 12 months.

At the end of this year, 2006 and 2007 albums will be archived to a separate page and still be available for viewing. Visit often and enjoy....





American Rhododendron Society News

MEMBERSHIP FEES

As a member of the North Island Rhododendron Society, you are part of a larger organization called the American Rhododendron Society. Membership fees are set by the ARS and are paid in US funds by NIRS to the parent organization. The ARS membership fee for the last 8 years has been \$35 US, of which \$27 has been retained by the ARS and \$8 credited back to NIRS. After a number of years at this rate, the membership fee has been increased to \$40 US - \$30 of which will be retained by the ARS and \$10 credited back to the club.

In the past, the \$35 fee was for one ARS membership. In practical terms, many of us have joined NIRS as a 'couple' despite holding only one membership in the ARS. This year, the increased fee of \$40 US will include 2 family members, which recognizes the common practice at the Chapter level. This change will not make any difference at our local level and as a single or couple you will still receive only one Journal per household.

As a club, our fundraising efforts go towards the upkeep of the CV Rhodo Garden, the rental of the church hall, paying for our speakers, purchasing equipment (our projector and microphone systems most recently), and for the general expenses incurred in running the club. We continue to work hard at these fundraising initiatives, and have been frugal in our spending. The Executive feels that it is appropriate at this time to maintain our local membership fee of \$35 CDN, and subsidize the remainder of the membership fee, if required.

The ARS would be delighted to have any of our members increase their financial contribution by becoming a Sustaining or Sponsoring Member. In addition, we have a number of Associate members who belong to a different 'home' chapter, but have decided to be part of our group as well. For a small fee (approximately \$10 per chapter), you can be an Associate member of any other Chapter in the ARS. Several of our members belong to MARS, our sister chapter in Parksville, and attend meetings and functions there from time to time. If any of these membership alternatives are of interest, see Membership Chair Brian Staton for more details.



Garden Chatter, Natter and Notes

Thoughts on tilling the soil... excerpts of Lee Reich

Untilled soil contains thousands of dormant weed seeds waiting for light and air to wake them up. Untilled soil stabilizes over time and develops a network of large and small pores. The large pores are good for aeration and drainage of excess water. The small ones have capillary channels that hold water and move water up or sideways to roots. Organic matter is on the top, in nature, under that semi-decayed; humus content is highest toward the surface and declines deeper. Most plants have very shallow roots. Think of a Douglas fir, felled by a storm...hence, very shallow roots.

It is better to put mulch on the top, rather than digging it in, so it will gradually decay and filter into the top layers where it is needed.

When planting a tree or shrub, try not to disrupt the soil any more than necessary. Dig a hole just deep enough to get the roots in, and make it a wide, shallow v-shaped hole. Put the same soil back into the hole around the stem, add compost.

The only exception is if soil is clay - then it has to be broken up by adding peat or better still, sawdust, add lime and some nitrogen fertilizer. Put a thin layer of mulch or compost all over the soil to discourage seedlings of weeds. Water will penetrate better also. Soil compaction is bad - make little paths here and there, with cement slabs or other stepping stones.



LIBRARY NEWS



Noni here... once again putting on my Librarian cap for a few minutes to pass on some library news.

We are fortunate to have an extensive library of research books available to all members that can be signed out for normally one month at a time. To ensure that our members have adequate access to our books during the busiest of gardening times we've allowed books to remain signed out over the summer months. I'd like to remind those that did keep their loaners to please return them to the library for the September meeting. Magazines as well!!

Other news regarding reading material for the library this year is all about magazines! As most members are aware we have subscribed to the "Garden Wise" magazine for several years now. This past year we added two new magazines "Fine Gardening" and the Royal Horticultural Society's "The Garden" magazine. Both magazines are very well received so we have decided to add a couple more to our repertoire. This year we will be adding "BBC Gardener's World" and "Gardens Illustrated", both monthly subscriptions.

VANCOUVER ISLAND HYBRIDIZERS

The Weesjes/Larson Connection

*by Alan Campbell, Cowichan Valley Chapter
Part I*

The University of British Columbia knew talent when they saw it. Evelyn Jack received her degree in horticulture in 1954 and was immediately hired by the university into its horticultural program. Three years earlier, the university had hired a young man newly emigrated from Holland and employed him in its burgeoning Botanical Garden. The young man was Nick Weesjes, and he was elevated to head gardener in 1955. The next 25 years saw Evelyn Jack and Nick Weesjes increase the prominence of the genus *Rhododendron* in western Canada and the Pacific Northwest area of the United States as well as the breadth and depth of the UBC campus gardens. During the ensuing 25 years, three relationships developed which would enhance the gardening pleasures of the growing number of rhododendron enthusiasts in British Columbia.



The Larson hybrid 'Malahat'

Though I have mentioned in an earlier article the relationship that grew between UBC and the newly formed Rhododendron Species Foundation at Federal Way, Washington, I would like to expand slightly on that subject. In 1964, Dr. Milton Walker of the Foundation and Mary Greig approached UBC concerning U.S. import regulations, which disallowed the Foundation to bring plant material directly from Britain to the U.S. I should clarify here that even though plant material could not go directly from Britain to the States without being fumigated, effectively destroying the plant material as well as any parasites, British material could enter Canada and, by

agreement, the States and Canada would allow plant material to cross the 49th parallel. It was another case of foreign elements using Canada as a stepping-stone into the United States.

Dr. Walker had amassed a large amount of seed and cutting material from the best of British gardens, so much that UBC had to dedicate the task of propagating this material to a proficient individual. Evelyn Jack was that person. The agreement with the Foundation allowed UBC to keep for itself an example of each species that Evelyn propagated. These in turn were handed over to Nick Weesjes to add to the botanical garden on the campus grounds. It was from these introductions that Evelyn began to propagate additional plants to begin her own collection of rhododendron species. The second relationship which developed, fortunately for rhodo growers, was also with a fellow from the Lower 48. Hjalmar Larson, a nurseryman in the Tacoma area, was no stranger to our province. During his annual fishing trips to Campbell River, he became acquainted with the Royston Nursery and established a friendship with Ted and Mary Greig. In 1954, Larson was invited to give a lecture on grafting at UBC, and through this event came to the attention of Evelyn Jack and Nick Weesjes. Sometime later, Ed Trayling, a rhododendron grower and hybridizer on the Lower Mainland, also a friend of Larson's, closed the loop by arranging a visit to the Tacoma nursery for Evelyn and Nick. From as early as the late 1940s, Larson had been receiving seeds of rhododendron species and cuttings of English hybrids from Britain. He had somehow managed to do this despite the import restrictions.

Not only was Hjalmar a nurseryman; he also entered the realm of hybridizer. Here again, the problems of too much product and not enough time and space became an issue. He needed the help of other competent growers and Evelyn was high on his list. Over time, she received the product of 40 hybrid crosses and grew on more than 1000 seedlings from them. Growing these seedlings on, painfully evaluating every single plant, and registering those deemed the best has resulted in some of the finest plants that we can grow in our gardens.

...continued next month





Article is based on information collected on the Internet

Although many people detest spiders, and some outright hate them, they do have some redeeming qualities. Every year, billions of spiders do away with a large number of disease carrying and crop destroying insects. If every spider ate just one a day for a year, those insects, piled in one spot, would weigh as much as 50 million people. Spiders are, by far, the most important predator of insects in the world.

Spiders are beneficial inhabitants of any garden, ecosystem, or home because of their important contributions to biological control of pest insects. Spiders are considered to be the most important terrestrial predators, eating tons of pest insects or other small arthropods every year. Spiders are generalist predators that are willing to eat almost any insect they can catch.

Some of the common insects controlled by spiders include aphids, caterpillars, cucumber beetles, flies, grasshoppers, leafhoppers, plant bugs and thrips. Spiders are abundant and found in most habitats. If there were no more spiders, the whole planet would be swarming with flies. They eat pests that damage crops and which bite us and our livestock. Life would be thoroughly miserable without them. So every gardener should be happy to see spiders setting up home. They only need to be left alone!

Garden spiders, because of their beneficial nature, should be conserved. Avoid the use of broad-spectrum insecticides or insecticides containing pyrethrum or synthetic pyrethroids. Other practices that conserve spiders is to leave a portion of the garden covered in organic mulch or plant cover crop to provide an overwintering site for egg masses. Having plenty of shrubs in the garden will give spiders somewhere to make their webs. By not using pesticide sprays, there will be more insects for the spiders to eat and this will also help to stop you poisoning them.

This fall while spending time in your garden, look around and see how many different kinds of spiders you can find. And at the same time keep in mind some of the gardening practices you can do to benefit spiders, who will in turn repay you by helping keep pest insects under control.

Internet articles by:
Karen Delahaut, IPM Outreach Specialist, University of Wisconsin
Dr. Linda S. Rayor, Assistant Professor of Entomology,
Cornell University.

STRENGTH OF THE NEW BORN



...by Harry Wright

Most of my days begin with a walk through our garden and in early March of this year, I noticed that something was changing and I had better keep an eye on it.

The item in question was my fire hydrant, a real fire hydrant, but one that had retired many years ago. The hydrant was something that I had always wanted and fell heir to many years ago. Every few years I like to relocate this unique garden ornament to different areas of our garden.

For the last few years, the hydrant has had a clump of trilliums growing beside it. One noticeable change every year is that the clump gets larger. This March I noticed another change, my fire hydrant was not standing as straight as it should be. It had a slight lean to it, which was acceptable; but about a week later I noticed that it was leaning even more, and this was not acceptable. Because of the way it was leaning, it would soon be in a horizontal position, totally not acceptable.

The hydrant was sitting on a small concrete pad. Beneath the pad were many new trillium shoots which were very aggressive and had every intention of finding room to flourish, even if there was nearly 100 lbs of concrete and steel in their way.

So needless to say the hydrant was moved so the trilliums could put on their beautiful display as they do every spring. My conclusion is to never underestimate the power of nature and the strength of the new born!



The Trilliums Triumphant

TIDBITS...



Greetings from the Australian rhododendron society.

In 2010 we will be celebrating 50 years as a society and 50 years of our famous national rhododendron garden in Olinda, Victoria, Australia

We welcome rhododendron & garden enthusiasts from around the world to our golden jubilee conference in October 2010

Speakers, garden visits, tourist attractions, excellent food & wine. ENQUIRIES TO: MARCIA BEGG
mnbegg@gmail.com www.vicrhodo.org.au

Harry asks that any members not using their ARS journals to please bring them to a meeting or drop them off at his place. He will see to it they are recycled to others.

Membership chairman Brian Staton reminds members that 2010 membership dues can be paid anytime starting at the September meeting. Dues remain the same for this year \$35 ...

I have been informed by our District Director that our Alternate Director, Ron McMaster, has resigned this position.

All clubs have been asked by Ron Knight to find someone that would be interested in this position.

Director and Alternate Director positions alternate from the Mainland to the Island. So we will need to find someone from the Island, willing to finish Ron McMaster's term.

Ron Knight's term is complete after the National Convention in May, 2010. So whoever the new Alternate is would have to be willing to move on to the District Director's position at that time.

Normal term for each position is 3 years.



Milner Gardens & Woodland

Fall Plant Sale - Sep 26 and 27, 2009

2179 West Island Highway, Qualicum Beach
10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Great discounts on heritage trees, shrubs and perennials propagated on site. Master Gardeners and BC Fruit Testers will be on hand to offer advice. Afternoon tea in the Tearoom, outdoor refreshments & hot dogs. Admission by donation. All proceeds support the Garden.

Members only early access Sep 25 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. - membership card required for entry to the early access sale.

RECIPE REQUESTS



Raspberry Cream Cheese Tart



... Diana Scott

Prepare an 8 - 9 inch tart pan with removable bottom by lightly spraying with Pam or greasing with butter. Set aside.

Shortbread Pastry:

In food processor process:

1 C all purpose flour

1/3 C icing sugar

Add:

1/2 C chilled butter, cut into pieces

Pulse until pastry comes together and forms clumps; press onto bottom and up sides of pan. Pierce crust with fork. Place in freezer for 15 minutes to chill. Bake 425°F until golden brown (10- 15 min?). Cool. (Can be made earlier in the day!) Reduce oven to 350°F.

Filling:

Process 'til smooth in food processor or mixer:

4 ounces (125 grams) cream cheese, room temperature

Add and process 'til smooth:

1/2 C granulated white sugar

Add one at a time 'til combined:

2 large eggs

Add:

1/2 C (120 ml) heavy whipping cream

1/2 tsp pure vanilla extract

zest of 1 medium lemon

Place 1 C fresh or frozen raspberries on crust, then carefully pour filling over top. Bake for 30 -45 minutes until filling is set (gently shake pan). Cool. Sprinkle with icing sugar and brown briefly under broiler if desired.

Serve cold or room temperature with whipped cream and extra raspberries! (Also works with blackberries, pitted cherries, sliced peaches or pears.)

Sticky Finger Squares (Gwen Wright)

Prep: 15 min plus refrigerating

MICROWAVE: 3/4C corn syrup & 2/3 C KRAFT crunchy peanut butter in large microwavable bowl on medium-high 1 1/2 minutes. Stir until well blended.

Add 3 cups post shreddies cereal, 1/2 C chopped dried cranberries, 1/2 C shredded coconut, 1/4 C raisins. Toss until evenly coated. Spread into lightly greased 8 inch square baking pan. Refrigerate at least 1 hr or until firm. Cut into 16 squares to serve.

Until Next Month
Noni



The Ultimate Rhododendron Conference

April 9 - 11, 2010

At the University of BC

Botanical Garden and
Centre for Plant Research,
Vancouver, Canada



Featuring:

- The perfect environment for learning about rhododendrons: the classrooms and grounds of **Canada's premier rhododendron garden.**
- **Six, 90-minute educational sessions** with lecture/slide presentations, practical advice, laboratory experiences, and field work, -- Your choice of two learning levels taught by professional teachers:
Novice (with Ron Knight) or **Veteran** (with Douglas Justice)
- **Tours of 3 world-class gardens:**
UBC Botanical Garden (www.ubcbotanicalgarden.org);
Nitobe Memorial Japanese Garden (www.nitobe.org);
VanDusen Botanical Garden
(www.vancouver.ca/Parks/parks/vandusen/website/index.htm).
- **Accommodations** at the West Coast Suites Hotel on UBC campus
(www.ubcconferences.com).
Or, stay at the nearby Coast Vancouver Airport Hotel
(www.coasthotels.com/hotels/canada/bc/vancouver/coast_vanairport/overview).
- **Free time in evenings** to enjoy beautiful Vancouver, site of the 2010 Olympics.
- **Easy and affordable registration** (limited to 100 gardeners). See your club president or the ARS District 1 website (www.rhodos.ca) for costs, daily schedule, session topics, registration details, maps, accommodation and meal information.

Register and reserve your hotel now!