



The Rhodoteller

www.nirs.rhodos.ca

OCTOBER

North Island Rhododendron Society

2010/2011 Executive

President

Diana Scott338-0208

Vice-President

Paul Wurz287-4301

Past President:

Harry Wright.....338-8345

Secretary

Pauline Thompson339-3423

Treasurer

Dave Godfrey335-0717

Director: Ways & Means

Nadine Boudreau339-0909

Director: Membership

Brian Staton337-5228

Director: Revenue Table

Chris Aldred335-3221

Director: Newsletter/Library

Noni Godfrey335-0717

..... nonigod@shaw.ca

Social Committee:

Louise Casson.....334-2331

Publicity:

Helena Stewart.....339-1733

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

5th October 2010 - Executive Meeting 2:00pm

The executive meeting will be held at the home of Chris and Phil Aldred, 4769 Kilmarnock Drive, Courtenay, BC.

Drive south on old Island Highway, turn left onto Spindrift (about 1 Km South of Kingfisher). Right onto Kilmarnock, Chris is on the right hand side.

12th October 2010 - Regular Monthly Meeting

A POWERPOINT PRESENTATION

Guest speaker for our October meeting will be Garth Wedemire of Pitt Meadows. Garth will be giving a slideshow program called "To MARS and back". The presentation will feature some of the many wonderful gardens on a tour of the Parksville/Qualicum area enjoyed by members of the Peace Arch chapter (PARS).

This colorful presentation will bring back pleasant memories to some of our members who may have toured the gardens in the past. Others will be in for an interesting journey through the photographer's eye and the technology of a PowerPoint presentation.



Hallowe'en



President's View

...by Diana Scott

I love this time of year! The increased moisture and cooler temperatures breathe life back into our summer heat-stressed garden. The 'mixed groundcovers' are green again (we can hardly call those weedbeds a lawn), the late blooming perennials are in flower, and many of the deciduous plants are beginning to colour up for fall. The garden looks quite lovely.

This is when I have fun starting to move plants, taking out ones that are overcrowding others, and potting up selected goodies for the May plant sale. Between rain showers I thoroughly enjoy those beautiful days out in the garden!

At our September General Meeting members shared ideas about what we might be doing for our Rhodos in the fall. Weeding is one thing we can do – making sure we reduce the potential for millions more in the spring! Our work party at the Comox Valley Rhododendron Garden made short work of a healthy crop of weeds leaving the garden looking terrific -- and taking quite a few seed-bearing weed specimens out of the gene pool!

The question of whether to rake up fallen Rhodo leaves or not was brought up once again, with converts continuing to reside on both sides of the fence. Can we prune Rhodos now? Probably not a good idea unless the branches or limbs are broken or dead. As with the fertilizer debate, we don't want new, tender growth initiated that would likely not fare well over the winter.

We spent most of the discussion on the notion of whether it was okay to fertilize Rhododendrons in the Fall. It is generally accepted that high nitrogen fertilizer after mid July may produce tender growth that won't harden well before winter. That said, fertilizer aimed at root and bloom development is used by some during the summer. The established practice of many of our growers is to fertilize in late

winter/early spring (February/March) when the soils are wet. This timing ensures good nutrient uptake by the plants and minimizes fertilizer root burn. We heard from others, however, who believe that late fall fertilizing is equally effective. As usual, there is no 'cut and dried right way' in the Rhodo world!

In my typical fashion I decided to look at what others might have to add to our discussion on fertilizing in the Fall. I found the following ideas and observations of interest and thought I'd share them with you.

I still refer to Terry Richmond's 1993 article "Fertilizing Rhododendrons the Organic Way" for good information on fertilizing rhododendrons (<http://www.rhododendron.org/v47n4p202.htm>).

Terry indicates in his article, and confirmed at our September meeting, that he typically fertilizes in early spring (March). For those wishing to add more organic nutrients to the soil and looking at developing an ideal growing medium for rhododendrons, I'd recommend looking at Terry's article.

Our friends at Meerkerk Gardens in Greenbank Washington have a good general article regarding the fertilizing of rhododendrons (<http://www.meerkerkgardens.org/fertilizers.pdf>).

Among the suggestions for Fall, the article indicates that although most plants don't usually need fall feeding they may benefit from top dressing of rotted manure in October. If plants haven't put on much growth a dose of 5-10-10 granular fertilizer might give them a boost. I know that many folks new to growing Rhododendrons and Azaleas believe that they need a specialty fertilizer, but as indicated in the Meerkerk article, those fertilizers are typically formulated to acidify the soil, and here on the coast we find our soils naturally quite acidic. In many cases, a general purpose fertilizer will work well and cost less.

I was very interested in the logic shared by Fraser M Hancock (ARS District 12 in the Niagara Region of Ontario) in his article entitled 'Feeding Rhododendrons: PLANTS SHOULD EAT WHEN THEY ARE HUNGRY'



<http://www.rhodoniagara.org/feed.htm>). He writes that rhododendrons typically have several growth flushes followed by a lag phase, and that the key to optimum fertilization is to take note of what is happening at the root level. He contends that fertilizers are best utilized by the plant while the roots are actively growing and that there is little benefit in feeding rhododendrons while the shoots are developing, since the roots are relatively inactive. Although he is talking about the weather conditions in Ontario, he explains why feeding in early spring when the ground is warming, and in late fall prior to dormancy are appropriate times to fertilize rhododendrons based on root activity. I found his explanation of the relationship between root activity, fertilizer, and plant growth quite informative!

So – when are you going to fertilize??? Have fun in your garden, and I'll see you at the October meeting!

MEMBERS NOTES

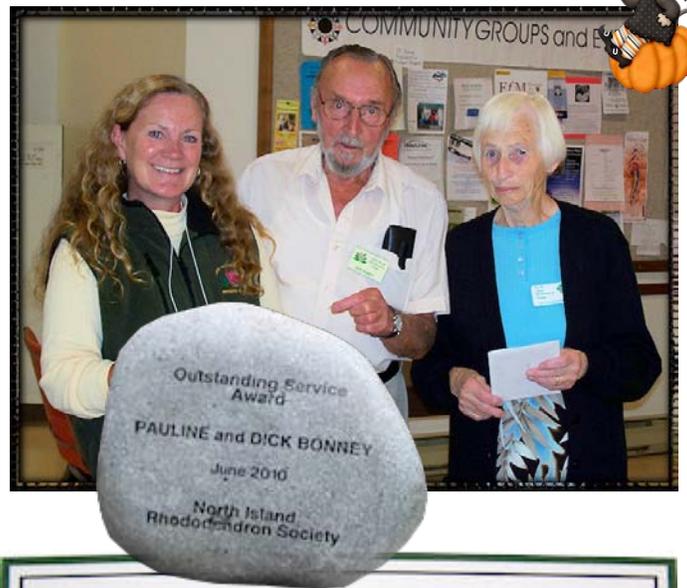
...by Dave Godfrey

Before I recap the news from this month's activities, I must begin by including some information I missed last month.

As mentioned, it was great to have our friends **Susan & Art Lightburn** of Parksville and **Sandy & Alan Campbell** from Cowichan join us at our summer picnic in June. What I forgot to mention was the draw made for the azalea 'Arneson's Gem' donated by Art and Susan. It was won by **Louise Casson**. Also, Al Campbell was drawn as the winner of two donated tickets for the Hort Society's "Father's Day Garden Tour". Since the Campbell's had a previous engagement that prevented them from using the tickets, **Ross Munro** kindly donated a mason bee house to them instead. Alan suggested the tickets be redrawn and, lo and behold, they were won by Art & Susan, who said they

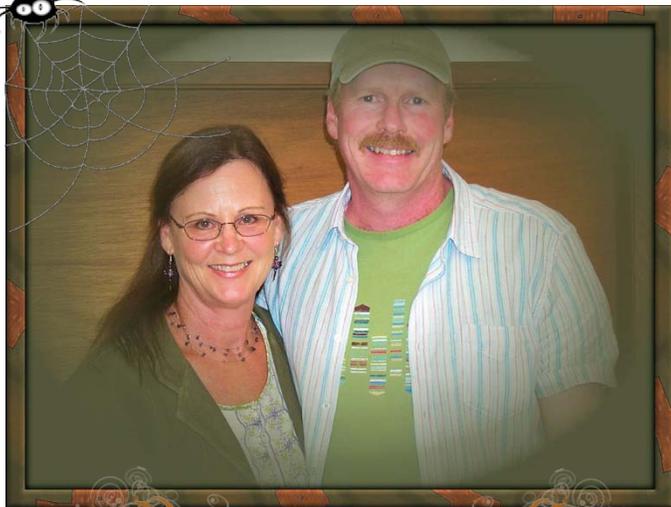
could use them. How could I have missed all this you ask? Well, I misplaced my notes until now.

This brings us back to September, when our first regular meeting of the term was held on Tuesday, September 14th. At the beginning of the meeting, **President Diana** took the time to present an "Outstanding Service Award" to two of our founding members, **Pauline and Dick Bonney**. (It was originally to be awarded along with the one to Don Law and Dave & Marleen Crucq at the June picnic, but circumstances prevented them from attending.) Recipients of the chapter's Bronze Medal award in 1999, ever since, the Bonney's have contributed more than ten years on the NIRS executive in a variety of roles and continue to be active participants in all club activities. Congratulations Pauline and Dick on your well deserved award.



It was great to have 42 members and guests attend for a most enjoyable program by Becci and Keith Russell. The Russell's slide presentation featured their trip to the U.K. this past May. It centered on the famous Bodnant Gardens, near Conway in Northern Wales, but also included some other gardens of the U.K. As Becci explained, upon arriving in England they immediately took out membership in the National Trust. This membership gave them free entry into the many gardens and protected areas around the country, plus as an added bonus it provided free parking!

The Gardens, spanning 80 acres situated above the River Conway with views over the Snowdonia range, are considered one of the most beautiful gardens in the UK. The gardens are divided into two - the upper, formal garden with Italianate terraces, wide lawns and a magnificent 120 ft. long Laburnum Arch; and the lower wild, wooded garden, known as "The Dell". Bodnant has endeavoured to grow a wide range of interesting and beautiful plants from all over the world, particularly China, North America, Europe and Japan which are suited to the Welsh climate and soil.



Becci & Keith Russell

Their 50 minute presentation included some colourful pictures of the many rhodos, azaleas, camellias and magnolias at the height of their bloom period. Magnificent mature trees and shrubs, some hundreds of years old, adorned the ponds and walkways throughout the gardens. As Keith pointed out, many of these specimens were planted in the late 1700's long before motorized vehicles. Therefore the trees and shrubs were brought to the UK as seedlings by

sailing vessels from halfway around the world.

At the meeting, we welcomed four new members to our chapter, **Melissa Petlock**, **Fiona Clark** along with **Wayne Anderson** and **Donna Chambers**. Many current members also took the opportunity to renew their memberships for 2011. It is important that members renew before November in order to ensure delivery of the winter issue of the ARS 'Journal' magazine in January. We also need the names of all paid members for our roster in the 2011 members' handbook due out in January. So if you haven't already done so, please be sure to renew your membership with Brian at our October meeting; or mail your \$35 cheque payable to N.I.R.S. to our club's mailing address found at the bottom of the first page of the newsletter.

For the Show & Tell, **Noni Godfrey** brought in her grafted rhododendron from the workshop last spring. Three of the four grafted branches have taken and doing very well, with the original root stock, *Bruce Breckbill*, reforming on the branch that did not take. It will be interesting to see how this plant, with its various colors, develops in a few years.

Congratulations to the many prize winners of the evening. **Peter Guertler** who won the raffle prize *R. Kokardia* provided by **Paul Wurz** and as a secondary prize *R. minus* donated by **Brian Staton** was won by **Claudia Ellis**. Claudia's husband, **Jake**, was the lucky door prize winner of a mason bee house donated by **Ross Munro**. Our newest member **Fiona Clark** won a fancy sedum planter donated by **Noni Godfrey**, and guest **Marilyn McClelland** won the jar of wildflower honey donated by **Pauline Thompson**. Special thanks go out to **Marlene Dey**, Hort Society member and friend of **Louise Casson**, who helped out in the kitchen. The goodies were delicious. Thanks to all those members who pitched in and brought the treats.

As a chapter project, **Harry Wright** will be leading a committee of interested members through the process required to name and register new rhododendron plants. Any members interested in the process are asked to contact Harry or President Diana. The committee will likely meet later this fall.

Vice President **Purl Wurz** is organizing a return visit by our friends of the Whidbey Island chapter. A good show of hands by those members willing to billet Whidbey members ensures that the plan for mid-May

will likely go ahead. Further details as they transpire. At the meeting, our new garden director, **Ross Munro**, advised that our CV Rhodo Garden was in need of some fall weeding and clean-up, and requested members attend a work party on Thursday morning, Sept. 16th. Perhaps due to involvements with the B.C. Seniors Games, only a handful of members attended. Only 6 members arrived to tackle the clean up. Weeds were pulled and pathways raked, and when it was all over the gardens looked in great shaped for the winter season. (See photos added to our web site's "Work Party" gallery.)

It's now time for fall harvests. So don't forget to bring along some of the bounty from your gardens to share with other members by making a donation to our Revenue table. **Christine Aldred** appreciates any and all donations to her fund raising efforts.

For those who have one, don't forget to wear your name tag to the meetings. You never know when that extra raffle ticket might be the lucky winner! See you at the meeting.

MEMBER PROFILE



HELENA STEWART

Helena Stewart has been playing with words since before the days of Scrabble so volunteering to handle publicity for NIRS is just par for the course. Born in Edmonton on a morning when the mercury hit minus 51 degrees F., Helena has spent a good part of her life seeking out warmth, a little like Robert Service's Sam McGee.

She grew up on a 40-acre dairy/berry farm in the Fraser Valley which meant intimate familiarity with agriculture and hard work but also an intro to the joys of gardening by her green thumb mother, the indomitable Sophie.

After finishing UBC, she went overseas with the first group of CUSO volunteers to Sarawak, Borneo and

finally warmed up nicely in the equatorial jungle. Returning home, she and her husband put down roots in Toronto (not warm) where their son was born and Helena went back to school (Ryerson) to pick up a graduate diploma in film and television production.

Helena spent six years as a TV producer and director, and then launched a small production company called Synapse with three associates. Producing shows from script to final edit for Canadian broadcasters was enormous fun and might have been the start of a fortune had Helena and her partners been better accountants.

She then moved to Global Television to become head writer on a couple of series. While in this job, she was hired as a comedy writer with The David Steinberg show, an adventure too long to relate here but one that brought her to California and then Western Canada.

Moving into fast forward, she edited a magazine in Palm Springs (where it was super warm) for six years before returning to Canada to write radio drama for the CBC alternating scriptwriting with 20 years as a travel writer.

After shuffling around the world and tromping through more than 75 countries, Helena has put her suitcase and camera into mothballs in favour of a more gentle life raising vegetables and perennials, chasing deer, happily cooing to her rhodos and generally looking after her rootbound husband, Roy. She has only one plea: can't we get this global warming thing moving into the Comox Valley a wee bit faster?



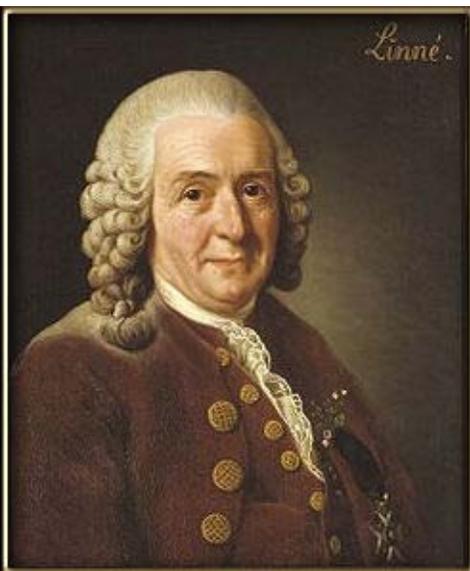
A fallen leaf
is nothing more
than a
summer's wave
Goodbye!



Botanical Plant Names

Have you ever wondered how Latin plant names came about? Our system of using Latin to name biological organisms was developed by Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus (a.k.a. Carl von Linne) in the 1700's. He wrote a book called '*Species Plantarum*' which was published in 1753 outlining his system. The system is known today as the '*Linnaean binomial system of nomenclature*.'

Linnaeus was born in the countryside of southern Sweden. His father was the first in his ancestry to adopt a permanent last name; prior to that, ancestors had used the patronymic naming system of Scandinavian countries (Johansson – son of Johan, Peterson – son of Peter.) His father adopted the Latin-form name Linnaeus after a giant linden (lemon) tree on the family homestead. Carl Linnaeus got most of his higher education at Uppsala University and began giving lectures of botany there in 1730.



Originally named Carl Linné, he eventually Latinized his name to Carolus Linnaeus. He was knighted by the Swedish government, allowing him to address himself as Carl von Linné.

Born: 23 May 1707, in Sweden; **Died:** 10 January 1778 (honored by being buried in Uppsala Cathedral, equivalent to being entombed in Westminster Abbey).

In the 1740s, he was sent on several journeys through Sweden to find and classify plants and animals. In the 1750s and 60s, he continued to collect and classify animals, plants, and minerals, and published several volumes. At the time of his death, he was widely renowned throughout Europe as one of the most acclaimed scientists of the time.

The binomial naming system set up by von Linne uses Latin for two reasons. First, during the 1700's Latin was considered the language of educated people. Second, Latin isn't the language of any living people or nation; therefore, using Latin doesn't create any bias for, or against, any group of people.

As the word '*binomial*' means two parts, the binomial naming system is based on each plant having a two-part name. The two parts of the name are known as the '*genus*' and the '*specific epithet*.' Together, the genus and the specific epithet are known as the '*species*'. The species can be further broken down to specify a particular variety, cultivar or form. However, every plant name will be composed of at least a genus and a specific epithet.

The classifications are as follows: Kingdom, Division, Class, Order, Family, Genus, Species, Variety or subspecies, Cultivar and Forma. For most the categories of division, class and order doesn't mean a lot. However, when we get to the family level we start paying attention.

Below the category of 'family' is the category known as genus. Within a family, members that are most closely related comprise a genus. The genus is always capitalized. The plural for genus is 'genera'. *Rhododendron* (from the Greek: *rhodos*, "rose", and *dendron*, "tree") is a genus of flowering plants in the family 'Ericaceae'. It is a large genus with over 1000 species and most have showy flower displays. It includes the plants known to gardeners as 'azaleas'.

Sometimes the genus portion of a species name is abbreviated and this is acceptable, especially when referring to several different plants within the same genus, example *R. ponticum*, *R. canadense*, or *R. occidentale*.

Seeing the name is one thing, pronouncing it is something else and can be tricky. Here are several rules of thumb to help: Pronounce every vowel; Stress the next to the last syllable – if the next to the last syllable has a short vowel then stress the third from the end; Usually "ch" is hard.

Botanical Latin is an accurate and necessary tool used by professionals throughout the world to clearly communicate about plants. Learning botanical Latin can be challenging and frustrating. However, once you learn the basics of botanical Latin, you will never want to refer to plants by their common names again.

If you have an interest in Latin plant names, check for these books:

“*Dictionary of Plant Names*” by Allen J. Coombes, Timber Press Inc.

“*Gardener’s Latin*” by Bill Neal, Algonquin Books

“*How Plants Get Their Names*” by L.H. Bailey, Dover Publications.

(*Editor’s Note: compiled from information found on the internet.*)

	Kingdom	Plantae	
	Sub Kingdom	Tracheobionta	
	Super Division	Spermatophyta	
	Division	Magnoliophyta	
	Class	Magnoliopsida	
	Sub Class	Dilleniidae	
	Order	Ericales	
	Family	Ericaceae	
	Genus	Rhododendron	



This year, with the early rain in September, I was able to get a jump on fall clean-up. Many people feel fall marks the end of the season, but to me it is the start for next year. While ‘taming the jungle’ I move and divide plants that have out grown their spot or did poorly in the heat of summer. I can be ruthless at this time of year, out with any plants that have not lived up to expectations, have become unruly, or are planning a take-over. If left for the spring, with their new growth and freshness, these plants are often given a pardon for another season.

Not now, with their bad behavior fresh in my mind, armed with a shovel, order will be restored!

When all is back in order, I usually have to go shopping for a few new additions as well as bulbs. Now is the time to get some new varieties. I did see Robert Argall at a nursery a while back, but there should still be some bulbs available. After planting these new additions, a bit of fish compost is spread around plants that seem to need a bit more nitrogen; then a layer of bark mulch goes over everything.



My garden, as all gardens, is always in a state of transformation. I have been focusing on shrubs, small trees and shade perennials. My love for the old English herbaceous perennials such as phlox, Solidago, aster, and the tall Shasta daisies has swayed to the ease of Rhododendrons, Japanese maples, ferns, hostas, Heucheras and new varieties of perennials that don’t require staking and so much dividing. And I can overhead water. I don’t think I will ever achieve my dream of just going out with a rake and my hand pruners for my fall clean-up, but I have to have some vision to keep me going.

I am still waiting with anticipation for the many deciduous trees and shrubs to display their fall glory in the garden. I have seen some plants around town showing some nice red and gold leaf colour. These were probably under quite a bit of stress from the hot August weather. I can see a change starting in my Japanese maples and the leaves of my Viburnum trilobum ‘Compactum’ are turning purple-red. Still a bit early and the temperatures are still quite warm.

Two shrubs that are really striking right now, not for their leaf colour, but for their berries is Skimmia japonica and Mahonia nervosa. Mahonia nervosa is a native plant of ours; it grows to two feet high and up to three feet wide. The stems can be up to 18 inches long with leaflets branching off. They are glossy green with small spines on the tips. They have a fern look to them. Right now they are producing clusters of vibrant metallic blue berries. These plants make a great woodland ground cover. They are excellent for dry shade. I have some at the base of fir trees where I can’t seem to grow much else.

The Skimmia japonicas are loaded with red berries. In the spring I purchased some of these plants (you need both male and female plants for berry production). At

that time they were in full flower, the males are the most beautiful and very fragrant. I remember the blossoms being covered by mason bees. I have them to thank for the large red berries on the female plants. Skimmias make great companion plants for Rhododendrons. They like semi-shade with soil on the acidic side. They are compact evergreens, with rich dark glossy leaves. The deer don't seem to like them much and can be quite drought tolerant. Most varieties can grow to five feet, but there are smaller varieties available. These two are great additions for that easy care, but interesting garden that I am aspiring to!

Boo

Recipe Requests!

Rolo Cookies

(Chris Aldred)

1 C Butter	1 C brown sugar
1 C sugar	2 eggs
2 tsp vanilla	2 ½ C flour
¾ C cocoa	1 Tbsp B soda
1 C chopped pecans	5 rolls Rolo candy

Sugar for coating

Cream butter, sugars, eggs and vanilla. Mix together dry ingredients. Add to creamed mixture and blend well. Add nuts, mix. Wrap balls of dough around rolo candy, and roll in extra sugar. Mini rolo bagged candy works as well! Bake 8-10 min at 350°F. Cool on rack.

Freezes well

Note. Try to use smaller rather than bigger amounts of dough around each candy for a more yummy cookie. Enjoy.

Potato Chip Cookies

(Ruth Fowler)

½ lb Butter (no subs)	1 ¾ C Flour
½ C sugar	1 tsp vanilla
¾ C finely crushed potato chips	

Cream well together the butter, sugar & vanilla. Add flour, dough will become soft and smooth. Add potato chips and mix well. Drop by spoonful onto lightly greased cookie sheet. Bake 350° F for 15 minutes.

This recipe was given to Ruth by Doris Leighton, Jack Leighton's mother. They were both in the Mississauga Stitchery Guild in Ontario.

Plum Streusel Cake

(Diana Scott)

Cake:

2 eggs(separated)	¼ C Margarine
¾ C Sugar	1 ½ C flour
1 tsp BP	½ C milk

Topping:

½ C brown sugar	1 T margarine
2 C quartered prune plums	1 tsp cinnamon

Glaze:

¼ C icing sugar	1 tsp milk
¼ tsp vanilla	

Beat 2 egg whites firm but not dry, set aside. Cream the margarine, sugar and egg yolks until fluffy. Mix flour and baking powder together. Alternate blend the dry ingredients with milk into the wet mixture, then fold into the egg whites.

Turn into greased 9 inch square pan and arrange the plums on top. Combine remainder of topping ingredients and sprinkle on top. Bake 350°F for approx 35 mins. Cool, then drizzle glaze mixture on top. Can be served with whipped cream!

HAPPY *Haunting*

Until Next Month
Noni