



The  
Rhodoteller

www.nirsrhodos.ca

**North Island  
Rhododendron  
Society**

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2015/2016**

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**JUNE 2016**

**Coming Events**

**7 June 2016 -- Executive meeting**

This month's meeting will be held at the home of our secretary, *Carolyn Chester*. The meeting will start at **10 a.m.**

**11 June 2016 -- Annual June Picnic**

We're having a party! Please see inside for a special invitation from Summer Joy and Jim Webb to attend our Annual June Picnic at their place on 11 June at 4 p.m. If you have never seen their garden you are in for a treat. This is a garden I would describe as delightfully quirky and they would describe it as a work-in-progress. It is a beautiful garden full of surprises, with gorgeous, unique plants hidden around every turn. A fun place for a wind-up to another successful season.

**Rhodo in the Banner**

No contest this month -- just another beautiful rhododendron that I have recently fallen in love with. I saw this at our plant sale in the truss show.

Who is it? More photos and descriptions inside.

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

# President's

## Notes



This is my final column as President of the NIRS and I'm going to miss it. Not writing this column -- I don't think I'm very well equipped to having such profound thoughts. I will miss the view, though! Much like an eagle sitting atop an old fir tree in the middle of a Merville farm, when I was President, I could see the big picture! Prior to my election to such a lofty perch, all I could see was the back of the head of the lady sitting in front of me. As President, I had a much better view. From the back row, I thought I was merely there to listen to the speaker of the night and feast on the large assortment of goodies behind me.

From the front of the hall, however, my view was clear and unobstructed. The first thing I noticed as President was how many people it takes to make a meeting happen. All those things from the speaker, to the coffee and goodies, to the raffle tickets and prizes -- they don't just happen. The chairs and tables and speaker systems don't just magically appear. People make that happen. I was surrounded by an excellent group that we called the Executive. We had others called Committee Heads and they make events like our Garden Tour, Plant Sale and Christmas Parties a success year after year. If I come out of this experience relatively unscathed it will only be because of those dedicated, hard working people around me.

But, I also came to realize that this club is part of something bigger than a garden club in a small city on Vancouver Island. We are a chapter of the American Rhododendron Society, an international movement which studies, and teaches and promotes the growing of our favourite plant, the magnificent Rhododendron. As President, I met and became friends with, members from all the chapters of District 1 of the ARS and met people from throughout Canada and the U.S.A. and beyond.

The NIRS really is an excellent club. The one attribute of this club that truly sets us apart from others is that we genuinely care for each other. The reactions to the illness and sad passing of our friend Dick Bonney is a prime example of how much we care but there has been so many other examples.

We have a new President and Vice-President ready to go for our next season. I can only hope that Judi and Maureen enjoy their terms nearly as much as I have. Let's show them our thanks and support for their efforts in every way we can. And don't forget those members of the Board of Directors who are carrying on working hard to ensure the success of the NIRS.

Thank you everyone for giving me the opportunity to serve as your President over the past two years. I probably enjoyed it way more than you.

Jake

## INVITATION TO 'GARDENERS GREEN'

Rhodo Club Garden Party,

Saturday June 11th, 4 pm.

*We're really excited you're coming to 'Gardeners Green' for the Garden Party! Please remember that our garden is a work-in-progress, so you won't be seeing a complete and perfect garden, and we hope you'll excuse the many ESA's (embarrassing scruffy areas) in between the nice spaces we've been creating. Some of you may have seen our garden last summer, so you'll be able to see what progress we've made in the last year. There are a thousand things, both great and small, that we'd like to have got done before your visit, but alas, unless some cosmic reorientation suddenly produces days that are fifty hours long, and we give up sleeping altogether, you'll just have to take us as we are.*

*We know you're always game for game-playing, so we've come up with a bit of entertainment, and we also know that some of you enjoy a high-spirited game of word-play (as we do) more than a high-energy game of tennis. So no Jake, we haven't devised a course for playing golf, or even a croquet match; although it would no doubt be a fun challenge on our greatly varying terrain. And no badminton, or frisbees or beanbags will be involved either, so the less dextrous amongst you don't need to be shy about participating. No, we've come up with a treasure hunt instead, so wear your thinking caps and best eye glasses for this mental challenge, and some good walking shoes too. The clues will be all over the property, and you can get together in groups of six and pool your resources to solve the riddles during a certain period of time. Whichever group has the most correct answers when the time is up will win the prize. If you happen to have a clipboard and pen you could bring along, that would be great, as we'll need one per group. Luckily for you, we ditched the idea of having the game-playing involve prizes for who pulls the most weeds, so you can leave your kneepads and trowels at home.*



*And forget about counting jelly beans in a jar, we'll also be having a "How Many Green Men (and Women) are in the Garden" contest, with a lovely prize for whoever counts or guesses the closest number. So once again, you'll have to explore every nook and cranny of the property to find them (see pix). All in all, you'll be certain to have worked up an appetite by dinnertime! And Nadine has assured us you're all wonderfully well trained about what to bring with you: plate, cup, cutlery, your favourite chair, etc. (and possibly a clipboard and pen). And it would be especially helpful if each of you could do a rain-prevention dance to keep the wet stuff away for the day, so be sure to get out there and work some voodoo on the evening before.*

*For those who haven't been before, we're at [2727 Merville Road](#). Go to the Merville General Store on the old island highway, turn beside the store onto Merville Road, and we're a short way along on the left side, a wooden house with a green metal roof, a sign by the driveway saying Gardeners Green, and the garden's out back,*

*Looking forward to seeing you all then!*

*Summer and Jim*



## THE RHODO GARDEN

*By Wolfgang Hoefgen*

What a turnout at our last work party in May! I do not remember all the names, but we had 15 people to help. And help they did!

Just look at all the work they accomplished -- first of all they spread the remaining bark mulch and finished fertilizing all the plants. Then all the beds were weeded and two new rhodos were planted. All the edges and walkways were cleaned to make it super nice for Mother's Day and we still had time to lift and replace most of the brick edges. With our "May is Rhododendron Month" banner flying high the garden is looking great.

And then, as with every work party we enjoyed a well deserved coffee break with cookies and Peter's famous, and delicious, cake.

We will have our next work party **June 14th at 7 pm** to stay away from the hot daytime hours.

We will need 2 or 3 wheelbarrows to spread gravel along the paths and there will also a good number of rhododendrons ready to be deadheaded.

Hope to see you all there.

# Spring Bus Tour to Parksville and Qualicum Beach

*by Pauline Thompson*

On May 12, members of the NIRS enjoyed a tour of five gardens of members of the Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society (MARS) in the Parksville, Nanoose and Qualicum Beach areas. Thanks to the organizational and persuasive skills of a very busy MARS director **Kathy Loyer** and the generosity of the MARS members, our tour group was exposed to 'proven performer' gardens ranging in age from only six years to more than 30 years in the making.



The Derkach's

We started at the home of **Doug Kitts**, a member of the Lower Mainland rhodo society since the mid-eighties; he began his new and diverse garden in Parksville only six years ago. A rhodo hybridizer and beekeeper, Doug also acted as our tour guide for the trip. A tip from Doug was to put a cattail stalk into a bamboo stake and let the hummingbirds pull apart the head of the cattail for nesting material.

Next stop was at the well-established and lush garden of **Al & Maria Bieberstein** in Nanoose Bay where we had an early lunch with tea, coffee and refreshments provided by MARS members. **Skip & Doug Cockburn** guided us through their lovely compact garden and then we went for a short walk around the corner to the home of **John & Arlene England**. The Englands also had a six-year-old garden that was densely planted with rhodos and companion plants giving this smaller garden a feeling of a much larger size.



After a brief visit to the Qualicum Beach Museum with its little heritage garden and interesting collection of fossils we headed off to our last stop of the afternoon. MARS President **Linda Derkach** and her husband **Al** hosted our group at their beautiful waterfront home in Qualicum Beach. They maintain a spectacular collection of rhodos in the front of their property that has a stunning view of Mt Arrowsmith and the Marshall-Stevenson Wildlife Sanctuary. The back garden looks across the Strait of Georgia towards Texada and displays the heat loving potted succulents. There we had an opportunity to socialize with a number of the MARS members and enjoy a very generous afternoon 'tea' of sandwiches, cheeses, desserts and beverages.

NIRS thanked each of the MARS participants and tour arranger Kathy Loyer with gifts and cards put together and presented by **Christine Aldred**. Many thanks to **Diana Scott** for taking our 'official' photos and hopefully her larger collection of garden and bloom photographs will be available on the website

## GROWING RHODODENDRONS IN THE SUN

With many thanks, the following article is a re-print  
of an article taken from the Paghat Garden site.  
([www.paghat.com](http://www.paghat.com))



**For some gardeners it's just not possible to change the fact that one's yard receives an awful lot of sunlight. It doesn't mean rhododendrons are out of the question. Dwarf rhododendrons such as this *R. yunqningense* prefer a good bit of sunshine. Some larger varieties are also sun-tolerant, & a few actually prefer sun.**

ten years want a sunny spot & will bloom poorly in shade. By contrast, big-leafed rhododendrons which exceed six feet want the dappled shade with only a little sun, though the exceptions here are quite numerous. Although it tends to be true that small-leaf varieties tolerate more sun than big-leaf, there are big-leafed Iron Clads that also tolerate sun, so leaf size isn't quite as good a general gauge as dwarf or semi-dwarf.

A little hillside with lots of sun-loving dwarf rhodies can be a splendid thing to see. Or for a mix of sizes including some that are not sun tolerant. A gardener could first install, say, one substantial *Japanese maple*. Then there could be some mid-sized big-leaf rhododendrons near the maple where they will grow up together, the maple always ahead of the rhodies in size providing dappled shade. Plus the dwarf rhodies can be placed farther from the maple where shade doesn't fall.

### About Rhododendrons & Sun Tolerance

It is commonly said that rhododendrons are shade plants. But really the majority want dappled sunlight or half-shade & half-sun. A surprising number of rhodies actually prefer & do better in direct sunlight. I'm speaking of Puget Sound (USDA zone 8, Sunset zone 5). Sun tolerance will never be strong in the hottest states, but in many zones, with careful selection, it is definitely possible to create a rhododendron garden even in a yard that receives full morning sun or full afternoon sun, up to as much six hours a day before it becomes a real struggle.

How to select sun-tolerant rhodies? As a generality with exceptions, dwarf rhodies that reach only 3 feet in

Here's a starter-list for selecting sun-tolerant rhodies:

1. Large deciduous azaleas are as a generality very adaptable to sunnier yards. *R. calendulaceum*, the Flame Azalea, is a large native species which prefers full sun. *R. serrulatum*, Swamp Azalea, also loves the sun just so long as its feet are never completely dry. Many other species of large deciduous azaleas will be at least tolerate sun, even if dappled shade/sun would have been slightly better. We have *R. occidentale x calendulaceum* in a full sun location where it thrives, though its blooms are exhausted sooner than if it had more shade (in time, as nearby maple & hornbeam trees continue to grow, this azalea will get decreasingly extreme sun exposure). Our large *Whitethroat Azalea* hugely likes its full morning sun exposure, but if it were getting both morning & afternoon exposure, that'd be overdoing it.

2. "Iron Clads" or Catawbas (hybrids mostly derived from an American species, *R. catawbiense*) are big-leafed varieties bred for winter hardiness. Most prefer dappled sunlight, but quite a number of them are in fact sun tolerant (but check specifics for each cultivar before assuming any given Iron Clad will do well in sun). They are among the most common offerings with scores of cultivars, but unfortunately they're rarely labeled for easy recognition as iron clads, so you have to have a rhody book to hand to check while in the nurseries. Such rhodies may be listed as Elepidotes, Catawbas, or Iron Clads. When gardeners discover that rhodies do bloom better in sunlight despite that leafscald is a risk, they are usually speaking of Iron Clads whether they know it or not, since it isn't true of the more sensitive large-leaf rhodies the blooms of which fade, shrivel, & darken in direct sunlight. One of the most sun-hardy of all the sun-hardy Iron Clads is *Jean Marie de Montague*,



shown here at the right in a May portrait. Another one although not as famously sun-tolerant is *Anna Rose Whitney* we have in a full afternoon sun location, where it has never shown the least sign of stress. We also placed *Blue Peter* & *Nova Zembla* in full direct sunlight, under the assumption that these old garden standards were most adaptable, & they've done superbly. The one proviso is all of these do have companion shrubs or young trees nearby, which function as windbreaks, as winter winds can be more harmful than an extra bit of sunlight.

3. *PJM*s are famously adaptable shrubs with mahogany leaf color in winter. This group of cultivars include some that are nearly dwarf, but most can reach six feet or taller, though they grow slowly. They prefer more sun than most rhodies & won't achieve maximum winter leaf-color in shade.

4. "Carolina rhododendrons" are also Iron Clads but are small leaf in contrast to the Catawbas with larger leaves, though they are crossed with one another so often leafsize doesn't always define them. These are derived from the native *R. carolinianum*. A very high percentage of these will actually prefer full sun, though roots should never dry out. In a burning summer, or in windy winter sun, they might suffer leaf scald or desiccation if totally unprotected, but even so, they'll bloom better than in shadier locations. *R. c.* 'Dora Amateis' is typical of the small-leaf Carolina hybrids & it definitely does best in full sun. It develops interesting leaf coloration in sun that it lacks in shade. Sort of mid-dwarf, not totally small, can be 4 or 5 feet high.



5. The beautiful large Loderi hybrids are almost never sun-tolerant with one gorgeous exception, 'Loder's White.' Its bloom & bud are shown here at the right as photographed in early May.
6. A whole series of Polly Hill's dwarfs reach 3 feet & are very round, compact, & "big appearing" despite being so short, & the majority do want sunlight. Polly Hill small-leaf hybrids are more expected to be sun-tolerant, but 'Hill's Bright Red' is typical of the ones that have a more substantial mid-sized leaf & look like scaled-down versions of larger varieties. Hill's Bright Red used to be a garden standard but by now may have been displaced in the marketplace by a later version that is also bright-bright red.
7. "Species dwarfs" are where dwarf hybrids get their sun- & cold-tolerances. Several evergreen varieties of *R. eriocarpum* are called "Gumpo Azaleas" & do best in sun. *R. dichroanthum*, *R. fastigiatum*, *R. letcherianum*, *R. lepidotum*, *R. leucaspis*, *R. litangense*, *R. nakaharae*, *R. poukhanense*, *R. rupicola*, *R. russatum*, *R. williamsianum* & most of the dwarf species from Tibet & China tend to prefer bright sun & very well-drained soils, although being adapted to alpine & subarctic direct sun, this doesn't always translate into heat resistance; rather, it means that in temperate zones they can or even should go in sunnier locations, but if temperatures are too high, emergency summer mulching will be needed to protect the roots.
8. "Large species rhodies" are not usually as sun-tolerant as dwarf species, but there certainly are exceptions. *R. concinnum* is relatively sun tolerant compared to most of the larger rhododendrons, so long as it doesn't simultaneously experience droughtiness. *R. acteum* genuinely prefers the sun but that one's still rather rare in the marketplace.
9. Tropical & subtropical rhodies can be added to this list mainly as a footnote; they won't often be good gardening choices unless you live in palm tree country. Most of the sun-hardy dwarves are alpine species used to full sun exposures at high altitudes where there is considerable ultra violet radiation. But the sun-hardy larger rhodies include tropicals & subtropicals, most of which would need protection from cold in the north. *R. hyperythrum* of subtropical origin is very heat tolerant & new hybrids are being developed by southern growers that will do well even in South & Southwest gardens, within reason. It could turn out that crosses with *R. hyperythrum* will harden up even for San Diego weather, but would likely need some shade protection in southern California, though they would easily take full sun in humid cloudy Florida. Depending on what it is crossed with, such hybrids may still be suitable to temperate zones. Subtropicals are most adaptable; the true tropicals might have trouble outside of a greenhouse except in the most humid warm states. Fully tropical rhodies often grow under rainforest trees, yet even so are adapted to high exposures of ultra violet radiation thus are hardy in sun. Tropical Vireya Rhododendrons (some are dwarf, some are quite big) occasionally become epiphytic in order to get closer to sunlight & have been found growing in the crowns of tree ferns, though they prefer to grow on the ground if they can get enough sunlight. I've not grown such tropical-climate varieties & won't hazard guessing how they would behave in gardens, but they're certainly worth looking into as sun-loving possibilities.

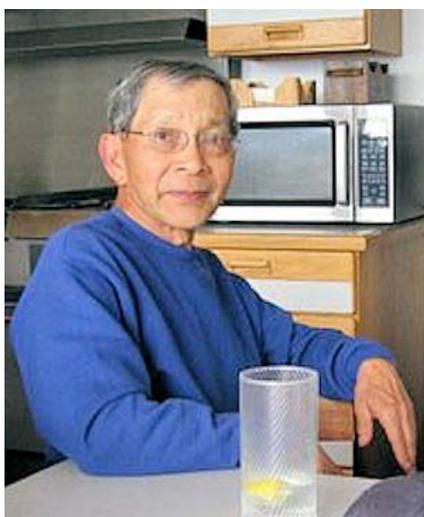
In all, you can see the numbers of rhodies that will do well in sun is quite extensive, even if a list preferring dappled shade would be vaster still (except in the dwarf category). Mostly my discussion, except where the tropicals & some southern azaleas are concerned, is about sun-tolerant rhodies for temperate climates, but I hope I've provided enough clues for southern gardeners to track down further details useful to them as well.

## THE RHODO IN THE BANNER

### 'JIM'S BLUEBERRY JAM'

Sadly, I couldn't find much information or any other photos of this lovely rhododendron. So, you'll just have to believe me when I say the colour of this flower was amazing. But look who the hybridizer is -- one of our favourites -- Mr. Frank Fujioka. For those who don't know him just take a look at the rhodos he has hybridized over the years.

Claudia and I have 7 of these rhododendrons in our garden and hope to acquire many more in the years to come.



Frank Fujioka



Jim's Blueberry Jam

	Cultivars/hybrids of Fujioka, Frank ordered by name <a href="#">year</a>	Reg.
1	<b>Bruce Briggs</b> 📷 ('Seaview Sunset' x 'pseudochrysanthum x Etta Burrows') (r.)	1998 y
2	<b>Burgundy Lace</b> 📷 ('Anna x Frank Galsworthy' x 'yakushmanum x Burgundy X Purple Splendour') (r.)	1993 y
3	<b>Chemainus</b> 📷 ('Noyo Brave' x 'C.I.S. x rex X Hansel') (r.)	1985 y
4	<b>Cherries and Merlot</b> 📷 ('Pretty Baby x pachysanthum' x 'Whid Bee') (r.)	2001 y
5	<b>Cranberry Lace</b> 📷 ('Anna' x 'Purple Lace') (r.)	1983 y
6	<b>Elsie Watson</b> 📷 ('Anna' x 'Purple Lace') (r.)	1977 y
7	<b>Glowing Gold</b> 📷 ('Yaku Sunrise' x 'Lem's Cameo') (r.)	1981 y
8	<b>Golden Pleasure</b> <a href="#">info</a> ('Nancy Evans' x 'Caroline') (r.)	1995 y
9	<b>Jim's Blueberry Jam</b> 📷 ('Koichiro Wada x Burgundy' x 'Blue Pacific') (r.)	1988 y
10	<b>Louisa Wittrock</b> 📷 ('Bob Bovee' x 'Lem's Cameo') (r.)	1983 y
11	<b>Magenta Medley</b> 📷 ('Midnight Mystique' x 'Koichiro Wada x Burgundy X Purple Splendour') (r.)	1993 y
12	<b>Mary Margaret Haugen</b> 📷 ('Seaview Sunset' x 'Elya X yakushmanum x C.I.S.') (r.)	1997 y

13	<b>Midnight Mystique</b> 🌸🌸 ('Midnight' x 'One Thousand Butterflies') (r.)	1986	y
14	<b>Miss Frances</b> 🌸🌸 ('Yaku Sunrise x Burgundy' x 'Noyo Chief') (r.)	1988	y
15	<b>Nancy Evans X Crest x macabeanum</b> 🌸🌸 ('Nancy Evans' x 'Crest x macabeanum') (r.)		n
16	<b>Nancy Evans x pachysantum</b> 🌸🌸 ('Nancy Evans' x R. pachysanthum) (r.)		n
17	<b>Opal Luster</b> 🌸🌸 ('Nancy Evans' x 'Percy Wiseman') (r.)	1988	y
18	<b>Orchid Bouquet</b> 🌸🌸 ('Purple Splendour' x 'One Thousand Butterflies') (r.)	1987	y
19	<b>Pink Pinwheels</b> 🌸🌸 ('Flirt' x 'Noyo Chief') (r.)	1983	y
20	<b>Pomegranate Splash</b> 🌸🌸 ('Midnight Mystique' x 'Magenta Sky') (r.)	1992	y
21	<b>Primary Pink</b> 🌸🌸 ('Yaku Sunrise X C.I.S x Jingle Bells' x 'Lem's Cameo') (r.)	1981	y
22	<b>Purple Amethyst</b> 🌸🌸 ('Koichiro Wada x Burgundy X Purple Splendour' x 'Smokey') (r.)	1985	y
23	<b>Saffron Silk</b> 🌸🌸 ('Nancy Evans' x 'Odee Wright x Crest') (r.)	1986	y
24	<b>Seaview Sunset</b> 🌸🌸 ('Nancy Evans' x 'Canadian Sunset') (r.)	1988	y
25	<b>Silver Dust</b> 🌸🌸 ('Golfer' x 'Chemainus') (r.)	2002	y
26	<b>Silver Skies</b> 🌸🌸 ('Koichiro Wada' x 'Medusa Group') (r.)	1982	y
27	<b>Sparkling Stars</b> 🌸🌸 ('Yaku Sunrise x Hansel' x 'Lem's Cameo') (r.)	1983	y
28	<b>Spring Fragrance</b> 🌸🌸 ('Koichiro Wada x Loderi Venus' x 'Van Nes Sensation') (r.)	1995	y
29	<b>Starbright Champagne</b> 🌸🌸 ('Yaku Sunrise x Hansel' x 'Lem's Cameo') (r.)	1983	y
30	<b>Vibrant Violet</b> 🌸🌸 (R. impeditum x R. augustinii ssp augustinii) (r.)	1966	y
31	<b>Watermelon Fizz</b> 🌸🌸 ('Seaview Sunset' x 'Koichiro Wada X Crest x macabeanum') (r.)	1998	y



Starbright Champagne



Richard (Dick) Bonney passed away in his home on the morning of June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016.

Along with his late wife Pauline, Dick was one of the founding members of the North Island Rhododendron Society and was always very active in the club. In 1999, he and Pauline received the *Bronze Medal* and in 2010 were presented the NIRS "*Outstanding Service Award*".

He will be missed by all who knew and loved him. We will think of him often, especially his humour during the "*Show and Tell*" segment of our meetings.

We have been informed by the family that, there will be a "Celebration of Life" to be announced in a few weeks.

We will remember you Dick...rest in peace!



# Remembering Richard.....



