



NEWSLETTER

Volume 21: 3

Editor: Ian E. Efford

April 2010

SPECIAL EDITION ***“GARDENS YOU MUST VISIT!”***

Future Events

**7th April 2010 7.30pm St John's Church,
Duncan**
**Barrie Agar, Head Gardener, Royal Roads
University**
“The Gardens at Hatley Park”

9-11th April 2010

The Ultimate Rhododendron Conference
April 9 – 11, 2010 at UBC Botanical Garden

24th April 2010

Nanaimo Horticultural Society Spring Sale

30th April 2010

Rhododendron Tour and Tea

Government House

1st May 2010 Saturday

CVRS THE PLANT SALE 10am-1.30pm

14-15th May 2010

CVRS Bus Tour

22nd May 2010

George Fraser Day and Heritage Fair in Ucluelet

October 2010

“Celebrating 50 year of the Victoria Branch of
the Australian Rhododendron Society and its
famous National Rhododendron Garden”

apple trees in pots and last year they bloomed in the last half of April when we were away on our Panama cruise. I looked the other day and the buds are already breaking! Even the English Hawthorne tree (sometimes called the May tree) is sending out its leaves.

Over the past couple of days I have had a walk on the Cable Trail in Cedar and another around Holland Creek in Ladysmith. It was great to see the trilliums, bleeding hearts, salmonberries, currants, and erythroniums out in bloom out in the forest.

And then there are the rhododendrons peeking out in our gardens!!!!!! Spring is really sprung! Speaking of spring, the Spring Sale is coming up, as you know. We do not have an organizer for the sale and I am doing some of the preliminary work on it. Twelve growers were invited and so far I have heard from six of them saying that they would be pleased to attend.

The venue is back at the Queen of Angels School, a very central location on a busy street! I am lining all of you up to do the various jobs needed on that particular day. Most of the jobs are not that arduous, and all of us are going to want to be at the sale anyway to see what treasures we can find that would look good in our gardens.

This sale is our major fund-raiser of the year. The money we earn on that day pays for the Society's expenses for the coming year (e.g. hall rental, speaker's fees, equipment we need to buy, picnic/Christmas party expenses, insurance, etc.). Thank you to those that have already answered my email or have volunteered during my phone calls. I have appreciated your response.

I would normally say at this point in my

President's Message

It is quite unbelievable how far ahead some of the blossoms are this year. I have two columnar

message that I will see you at the meeting next week. But that is not true this time around, as my wife and I will be already sightseeing in Thailand, before cruising back to Vancouver.

David Annis

***Oxydendron arboreum* (Sourwood, or Sorrel Tree)**

Roger Slaby

Native Range: Dry hillsides; woodland edges from Florida to Pennsylvania.

Hardiness: Zone 5-8.

Height: 25-30 feet, **Spread:** 20 feet.

Growth Habit: pyramidal with drooping branches.



Oxydendron arboreum

Flower characteristics: fragrant white, lily-of-the-valley panicles.

Foliage characteristics: iridescent green leaves maturing to lustrous deep green, 3-8 inches long; autumn colour; yellow, red and maroon on the same tree.

Cultural Requirements: acid soils, like rhododendrons, light shade or full sun in the

Pacific Northwest.

Difficult to transplant so best B&B or container-grown plants.

Propagation : Softwood cuttings in July - Cuttings- are difficult to root. Tissue culture production is the most successful.

Landscape Use: One of the best North American native trees, well grown specimens rival even the native dogwood.



Comment: A favourite of Vancouver Island deer. So must be fenced until it outgrows the deer.

Reference Sources:

Bir, Richard E. Growing and Propagating Showy Native Woody Plants. Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press 1992.

Dirr, Michael A. Dirr's Hardy Trees and Shrubs. Portland, Timber Press, 1997

Dirr, Michael A. Manual of Woody Landscape Plants, Champaign, Il, Stipes Publishing L.L.C. 1998

Propagation Group

The propagation group's meeting in April will involve a trip to Sooke to attend the Victoria society's propagation meeting. This will be on the 19th April and it is hoped that we can arrange to visit one garden beforehand.

If you wish to attend and want to car-pool, please let me know at efford@shaw.ca.

Ian E. Efford

The Society's Bus Tour 14-15th May

Please remember to pay to Bill Dumont the balance of \$140 per person by May 1.

From the Editor

In previous editions, I have tried to bring you short summaries about public gardens that have many rhododendrons and are well worth visiting. This edition of the newsletter has accounts of three in Victoria which are all spectacular and announcements of other events that you can attend during the next two months - the months of greatest rhododendron flowering. I expect to meet some of you as you wander around one or other of these gardens!

Ian E. Efford
efford@shaw.ca 250-597-4470.

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Finnerty Gardens putting on an early show

One of Canada's best collections of rhododendrons, the University of Victoria's Finnerty Gardens, is in bloom a month ahead of schedule. Visitors will see the rhododendrons at their best between now and the end of April.

The garden contains over 4,000 different trees and shrubs with more than 1,500 rhododendron and azalea plants, including 200 collected rhododendron species, and a spectacular range of companion plants.

The gardens are open to the public every day during daylight hours, and there is no admission charge.

The Gardens at Hatley Park

Barrie Agar, Head Gardener, Royal Roads University



When James Dunsmuir built his castle on the shores of the Esquimalt Lagoon in 1908, he also made plans for an intricate landscape to match his new stately residence. The son of Robert Dunsmuir the coal baron, and a former Lieutenant Governor and Premier, he was one of the wealthiest men in the province. While the Dunsmuir family is now scattered throughout the world and the Castle no longer a private residence, the gardens continue to bloom, and have attained a stately and settled air.

After the family took up residence in 1910 the first noteworthy garden constructed was the Upper Japanese Garden. Inspired by the tea garden built on the Gorge by the Kishida and Tanaka families, the garden lies on a gentle slope, and was extensively planted with flowering cherries, azaleas, and Japanese maples, all imported from Japan. Rock-lined streams meander through the site, and small stone and wooden bridges lead the stroller through the garden. The garden is spectacular in April and May with the bloom of cherries, rhododendrons, deciduous azaleas, and candelabra primroses.



The landscape architects Brett and Hall of Boston were retained in 1912 to design a garden worthy of Dunsmuir's grand house and social position, and reflect Edwardian tastes of the time. The first garden constructed by them was the Italian Garden adjacent to the house. It has a very formal air, with a sandstone loggia at one end, brick pathways, and box hedges. However, it betrays English sensibilities by the large plantings of flowers, and was Laura Dunsmuir's favourite garden. The Wisteria at either end of the loggia is a fragrant spectacle at the beginning of May.

Walking along the pathway at the top of the Japanese Gardens will take you past

the Tennis Courts and on to the Rose Garden. Laid out in a series of concentric arcs it still has the same layout today, although the roses have changed several times over the years. The only remaining rose from the Dunsmuir era is the American Pillar rose, a sturdy Rambler. The garden now consists of Old Roses, Hybrid Musks, many climbers and ramblers, and David Austin English Roses. Flanked by a border of lavender, the scent of the gardens is a delight from June to September.

The climbers are trained along sturdy ropes encircling the garden. This method of support was used in the French rose gardens of Roserie de L'Hay and Bagatelle. In the outer circles are the Old Roses such as the Gallica Rosamundi and Old Pink Moss. Hybrid musks complete the outer circle. The middle





beds contain David Austins English Roses, which resulted from crossing Old Roses with modern recurrent roses. The fragrance and form of the Old Roses combined with the remontant qualities of the modern roses give the garden a lengthy period of bloom and fragrance.

Beyond the Rose Garden is the Walled Garden, one of the few in North America, which contains the original glasshouse and footings from the Conservatory. The remnants of the Orchard are still extant, producing tasty apples come autumn.

Returning through the Rose Garden the visitor enters the Lower Japanese Garden. Constructed sometime between 1914 and 1919 it encircles a lake. Shirotae cherries are planted along the Western shore, while a phalanx of Pink Pearl Rhododendrons line the northern and southern shores. Now over ninety years old, they tower over the lake and path behind them. Rhododendrons were planted extensively in the lower garden as a group feature rather than as individual specimens. These were grafted, with *Rhododendron ponticum* being the rootstock

of choice. This is evident in several locations where it has overgrown the original graft. The lake boasts a Fishing Pavilion off of a small island representing a Tortoise, a symbol of longevity. From the stone path ringing the lake, two bronze cranes are visible on their own small island. They are often surrounded by dozing ducks, who obviously feel the cranes are keeping a watch out for predators. Layered along the eastern perimeter of the garden, Copper Beeches, Japanese Maples, and Rhododendrons provide colour for much of the year. The autumn colour can be spectacular in this garden, and many people consider it at its most beautiful.

The Gardens are open all year, from 10 am -6pm. Admission is \$9.75 for adults. Pay Parking is in Lot 3 below the Castle. Dogs are not allowed in the Gardens, but there are miles of trails through 500 acres of forests that provide pleasant walking. The forest with its many different eco-systems and old growth trees runs down to the Esquimalt Lagoon, itself a Federal bird sanctuary. This is a special site. It has been used by the First Nations people from time immemorial for food gathering. Salmon spawned in its streams, and deer and eagles still live in the forest. It has been a farm, a private residence, a military college and a university, and has given a little of itself to everyone that comes here.

The Government House Garden

Jeremy Brownridge, Director of Operations & Management Services, Government House

The property now comprising Government House grounds was first purchased in 1859 by George Hunter Cary, then Attorney General for the Colony of Vancouver Island. As a result of a string of poor investments, Cary was forced to sell his castle to Mrs. Elizabeth Miles. Governor Aurthur Kennedy purchased the property from her in 1865 for \$19 000, thus establishing the Estate of the Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia, or, Government House.



During the early years of colonial government ownership, there was little garden development. It was not until July, 1911 that the first formal, over-all plan for the gardens at Government House was developed. The first system of driveways was introduced, as were rocky outcrops, expansive lawns, and finally, additional trees and shrubbery

Over the next few decades, small additions were made to the gardens, largely reflecting the individual tastes of the Chatelaines who chose to contribute to the development of the property.

Iona Campangola in the garden

In 1957, Government House succumbed to fire, and burned to the ground. In the rebuilding process, landscape architect Robert Savery was contracted to provide a more comprehensive design to the grounds. Being born and educated in the UK, Savery naturally incorporated the British landscape tradition in his designs. He

used rhododendrons extensively in creating borders, glens and clusters that are now the signature foliage and flower of the Government House formal gardens.

The rhododendrons at the Estate of the Lieutenant Governor, Government House, play a significant role in the landscape of the gardens, and are among the oldest examples in the province. Although only in bloom for a few short weeks each year, it is their ever green foliage that provides the backdrop for the

perennial borders, gives a sense of permanence for the garden during the winter months, and shelter for the many birds that inhabit the grounds. Without rhododendrons, the ambience of the garden would be severely altered and lost forever.



The entire estate, excluding the House itself, is open to the public year round, from dawn until dusk. The estate is approximately 36 acres, with roughly 12 acres of formal gardens in the north of the property, and 24 acres of wild Garry Oak woodlands to the south of the estate.

The formal gardens, which include the bulk of the rhododendrons, are almost exclusively maintained by a group of dedicated volunteers called the Friends of Government House Gardens Society.

Typically, the rhododendrons bloom in early May. However, due to a warm spring, it is anticipated that blooming will commence this year in mid-late April. In

response, The Friends of Government House Garden Society is hosting a Rhododendron tour, followed by a museum tour and afternoon tea at the former head gardener's cottage on 30 April.





The Friends of Government House Garden Society Present

A Rhododendron Tour and Tea April 30, 2010

Government House Grounds

\$35 per person

Guided Walking Tour from the front door of Government House at 1:30 pm

**Tour the Cary Castle Carriage and Costume Museum
– including former Chatelaine's gowns**

Afternoon Tea at the Cary Castle Mews' Butterworth Cottage at 2:30 pm

Government House Executive Chef will be preparing traditional afternoon tea fare

Tour and tea limited to 50 guests. Wait list accepted for upcoming tours

For info and registration – call 250 387 2087 or GHinfo@gov.bc.ca

*Jerymy Brownridge, Director of Operations & Management Services,
Government House*

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The Nanaimo Horticultural Society Spring Plant Sale

Saturday, April 24, 2010 from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Country Club Centre, 3200 Island Hwy., North, Nanaimo.

Includes Master Gardeners' Clinic and selection of plants from VIU.

Corinne Perry, Nanaimo Horticultural Society www.nanaimohort.org

10th Annual George Fraser Day and Heritage Fair

Saturday 22nd May 2010 - 10.30am - 4.00pm

Ucluelet Community Centre

500 Matterson Drive, Ucluelet

10:30 - 11:30am

Grand Opening of George Fraser Community Room

Honorary Award Presentations

Bench Unveiling in Dedication to 'Coombs Old Time Fiddlers'

11:30am - 3:30pm

Guided bus tours to GFraser Memorial Park, Fraser gardens & historical sites
to include photo-ops with heritage 'R. Fraseri' rhododendron

Noon - 2pm

Bistro Lunch

1 - 4pm

Heritage Fair

Historical exhibits • Live music by 'Coombs Old Time Fiddlers' • Silent Auction

Wheelbarrow decorating contest • Door prizes • Aquarium display

Plant sale • Raffle • Kids activities • Power point slideshows & MORE...

Heritage Fair \$2; Children 7yrs/under Free • Bus Tour \$10 • Bistro Lunch \$5

OR Purchase one \$15 ticket for Heritage Fair, Bus tour & Bistro lunch

\$15 Tickets available in advance & on May 22 at 10 am

Evening Dance 9pm-1am with Live Music by 'Celtic Chaos'

(19+Yrs Venue) Tickets: \$10 Advance/\$15 At the door

For more information and advance ticket purchases please contact Wanda McAvoy

wmcavoy@ucluelet.ca 250-726-7772 Ext 225

American Rhododendron Society – Proven Performers List

The Public Education Committee of the ARS has asked chapters to compile lists of the best performing rhododendrons in their areas. The lists give plants with good form, foliage and flowers that are hardy and resistant to pests and diseases for the given area. The listed plants have proven their ability to perform well in members' gardens and are recommended to others.

The following page on the ARS website gives the Proven Performers Lists that have been submitted for the twelve districts of the Society: http://rhododendron.org/performers_intro.htm.

In District 1 – British Columbia, seven of the nine chapters have their Proven Performers Lists published by the ARS (the two missing chapters are the Fraser Valley and the Vancouver chapters).

An email from Ray Smith, Chairman of the ARS Plant Awards Committee was forwarded to each chapter president by Ron Knight on March 22, 2010. This is what Ray Smith said:

Subject: Proven Performer Updates

Dear District Director,

The time has come again for the chapters to examine and possibly revise their Proven Performer lists. This is one of the most popular parts of the ARS website and a great aid in introducing rhododendrons to a new audience. Please contact the chapter presidents in your district and ask them to look over their Proven Performer lists. Have some of the plants listed been surpassed by newer introductions? Perhaps some are no longer available on the retail market. Maybe everything is still fine with the list, and no changes are needed. Whatever the situation, a timely review is important.

If there are any changes, the easiest way is to have the chapter representative send the list to the ARS webmaster, Bob Weissman (weissman@arsoffice.org) directly. A copy to me would be appreciated, but is not necessary.

Thank you for your help.

Ray Smith, Chairman
ARS Plant Awards Committee

I would like to encourage all District 1 chapters to review their “Proven Performers Lists” and send revisions to Bob Weissman (Weissman@arsoffice.org). The year 2010 would be a good time for all nine District 1 chapters to revise their lists.

Garth Wedemire, Director - Fraser Valley Chapter

Hirsutum.info --- A great new website with rhododendron pictures

On Saturday, February 20th of this year, I received an email from David Godfrey of the North Island Chapter. Some of the contents of the email are reproduced below:

I have been communicating with Herman Van Ree in Holland, the webmaster of the rhodo database website www.hirsutum.info and sent photos on behalf of Harry (Wright). I am now just completing sending all of Ken's (Ken Gibson's) photos (480 total) They are big files (2 to 3 MB each) so have been limiting them to 3 per email. It is taking 163 emails to get them all to him (Herman van Ree).

.... We have also exchanged information about each other, and I have Herman's permission to share this information with you. (I have actually pieced together information from several emails.) He and Marjo plan to revisit Vancouver Island in spring 2011, as they were here last August (2009) but missed the beauty of the rhodos.

The links to view his house and property are....website home page: www.huize-zandbergen.nl house: www.huize-zandbergen.nl/tuin/index.html property: www.huize-zandbergen.nl/huis/index.html


Well, thanks to David, I had a look at both the "Hirsutum Project" website and Herman's website which is in Dutch but because it is mostly pictures it was easy to get around and enjoyable. The "Hirsutum Project" was started on June 3, 2009. As stated on the website --- The goal of the project is to collect as

Hirsutum.info: About Rhododendrons, Azaleas and Vireyas; a virtual arboretum

Why www.hirsutum.info?
 Rhododendron *hirsutum* was the first rhododendron to be classified and named. It was discovered in the 16th century by a Flemish botanist, Charles l'Ecluse, who later became called Clusius.

The purpose of this website is to give an overview (photos and information) of as many rhododendron species and cultivars (hybrids) as possible.
 A virtual botanical garden. A virtual arboretum.
 An online database with information and pictures.

Everyone can help to build this database. Just send pictures of your rhododendrons.
 See the list of contributors to the Hirsutum-project.
 Absolutely non-commercial, no banners or advertising here!



Rhododendron hirsutum

Photo Gallery
Rhododendron species (1246)
Rhododendron hybrids (8823)
Azaleas (3893)
Azaleodendrons (89)
Vireyas (912)

Rhododendron community
Plant Identification (1)
For hybridisers
Your garden
Rhododendrons worldwide
Various overviews

General information
Basic information
Taxonomy
Bloomtime
Useful links
Contact

Rhodo-finder by name:

enter at least 3 characters

Rhodo-finder by color:
purple

much information and as many photos as possible concerning rhododendrons. This includes *species*, hybrids, azaleas, vireyas and azaleodendrons.

I am amazed how quickly this website has grown. Eight of the twenty-six contributors of photographs are from Canada. There are over 2,850 photos of hybrids and 1,850 photos of species already in this

large database. As an example, there are eight photos of 'Hotei' from four contributors. With this website and database, we get an overview of the spread of rhododendrons worldwide. This website and the data that it contains, may help to 'find' cultivars previously thought to be extinct. Participate in this 10 year project of the Members of the Nederlandse Rhododendron Vereniging (Dutch chapter of the ARS).

Don't miss out on this exciting new website www.hirsutum.info --- you can set up your own virtual garden in the "Your garden" section. After adding your plants, you will be able to see pictures of your virtual garden.

Garth Wedemire, Fraser Valley Chapter

Editor's Note: With reference to the notice concerning **George Fraser Day** it should be noted that:

George Fraer was world acclaimed for his work in hybridizing rhododendrons and was posthumously awarded the American Rhododendron Society's Pioneer Achievement Award in 1991. He is the only non-American to ever receive this prestigious award.

A note of interest is that this is the long weekend in May and the same weekend that Tofino's Stubbs Island does it's open garden tours. The CVRS Bus Tour visited Stubbs Island and saw the facinating old garden with rhododendron that were 20-30ft high dotted through the forest. This garden is a "must see" but can only be seen on the couple of days each year that it is open for visitors. The Stubbs Island is a two day event, so one could take in the George Fraser celebrations on Saturday and travel to Stubbs Island on Sunday.

Leonardslee Gardens

With the value of the Canadian dollar increasing daily, there may be a member of CVRS who wishes to buy an established and famous rhododendron garden in England. The price is a mere \$10M and the house and additional \$7M. Details can be seen at:
http://property.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/property/gardens/article3721169.ece

ELECTIONS FOR THE 2010-2011 EXECUTIVE

At the Executive meeting on the 31st March 2010 Sharon Tillie was unanimously voted in as Chair of the Nominating Committee for next year. Janet Gardner has volunteered to be a member on this committee.

The constitution says the election shall be held in June unless decided otherwise by the Board of Directors. At the same Executive meeting, it was decided that the election should take place during the Annual General Meeting as part of the May General Meeting as the only event that we hold in June is the annual picnic.

A notice of the candidates for the positions on the Executive must be circulated no later than 14 days before the day of the election.

As the May newsletter will not go out in time, the proposed candidates for various positions are listed below. It should be noted that;

1. Various positions remain open at the time and we welcome volunteers;
2. Other individuals are encouraged to run for any of the positions listed or you can nominate another member.

Recommended Slate of Officers for the Board of Directors for 2010/11

President- David Annis

Vice President: Ian Efford

Secretary: Siggi Kemmler

Treasurer: Bill Dumont

Members At Large: Bernie Dinter, Carrie Nelson, Judeen Hendrickson, Sharon Tillie

The New executive will take office following the AGM.

[It should be noted that in order for David Annis to serve another year as president, it is necessary that a resolution to that effect be passed at the next general meeting on April 7th. A resolution will be put forward on this matter.

Volunteers for the Convenors positions.

Membership Chair- Sandra Stevenson

Website - Ian Efford

Past President- Ingeborg Wordsworth

Sunshine - Mary Gale

Raffle- Hilda Gerrits

Library - Elaine Kitchen

Garden Tours - Sharon Tillie
Club Liason, Alan Campbell
Propagation, Alan Campbell

**We do not have volunteers for the following
convenors positions:**

Speakers, Tea , Newsletter Editor, Plant Sale
Please consider volunteering for one of these
positions or join with a friend and volunteer for
a position together.

Sharon Tillie