



The **Rhodoholic**



Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society

Volume 27:5 June 2016

President's Message

In looking through the history of the club, I have noted that there are many presidents who served but one year. Many have served for the maximum of the two years allowed, and a few have exceeded that by special resolution. So it is with only a tad of guilt that I am sending my last message as president before passing the torch to a new president on June 18th at the AGM and picnic.

On a personal level, the past year was filled with challenges and opportunities, joy and sorrow. On a 'professional' level, albeit a volunteer level, I found the CVRS presidency challenging and rewarding. I am happy to say I did not develop a chronic tic, hives, or heart condition from the activity, and I am

CVRS Summer Picnic & AGM

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R. jasminiflorum ssp jasminiflorum

Vireya

Terrestrial

Evergreen

Hardiness: tropical

even happier to say I have met wonderful people and made some very good friends in the club and District 1. To them I say thank you for your support, patience, and kind advice.

In 2006, when I retired from VIU as Cowichan Campus principal, I found I much preferred working with plants than people (at least at the time) and I began an intense study of botany, plant nomenclature, propagation techniques, and as a result, I began a nursery. The first thing “they” tell you when starting a business is to consider “location, location, location”. If you have ever been to my place you know there was no consideration given to this at all. I ignored the ten acres of rock, a steep narrow driveway, the lack of a turn-around area for delivery trucks, the limited water available; furthermore, I determined I could develop the business at home. A nurseryman friend of mine pestered me to become a destination “boutique” nursery specializing in a valuable crop that I could wholesale: “It’s the only way to make any money in the business of plants” he said. I have always been a generalist so this advice ran against my natural tendencies, and I pretty much ignored him. I could not pass up the sales pitch for the latest and greatest cultivars of trees, hostas, peony or Japanese maple. It was

like Christmas every March when the deliveries came. I jammed my greenhouse with thousands of annual and perennial starts, specialty tree and shrub cuttings, hoping to sell the often untested product for our plant hardiness zone. Suffice to say my friend was right – I never made a profit. However, I had many positive surprises, I gained knowledge, patience, and in particular, friendship working with people in the horticulture world who share their expertise and love for plants freely.

It was also in 2007 that Sharon Tillie invited me to attend a CV Rhododendron Society meeting and that lead to the addition of the genus rhododendron to my love affair with plants. Nearly ten years later, I still love propagation, albeit on a much smaller scale and not for the purpose of retail. And I can honestly say I enjoy working with people almost as much as working with plants!

I wish the new president and board members all the best in meeting the goals of the CVRS – promoting the genus rhododendron and beautifying the public gardens of the Cowichan Valley and beyond.

See you at the picnic on June 18th!

Carrie Nelson, President

R. ‘Janet Ward’

Hybridiser: Slocock Nurseries, 1974

Elepidote Height: 7 ft.

Midseason H4

R. catawbiense x *R. griffithianum*

(sport of *R. ‘Cynthia’*) x ()



CVRS Summer Picnic & AGM

Saturday, June 18th starting at 11:30am

At the home of George Morgen and Verna Buhler

3908 Cowichan Lake Road, Duncan, BC

Phone: (250) 748-8889 Email: vlbuhler@shaw.ca

POTLUCK FORMAT:

FOOD PROVIDED: Salmon, chicken wings, hot and cold beverages

WHAT TO BRING: Potluck favourites, such as appetizers, salads, dessert, . . . your secret specials!! A barbecue will be set up for any special items you wish to cook! (If you have dietary restrictions, please bring something you can enjoy!!)

SEATING: There is considerable seating available; however, bring your folding chair if you like.

FUN AND GAMES:

SILENT AUCTION: of some special gifts

RAFFLE: for any donated plants

MAY NEWSLETTER "QUESTIONS" CONTEST: review the newsletter and participate!

HAT CONTEST: Two prizes for BEST HATS - one for a female, one for a male. Your hat **MUST** have one real flower, but other than that anything goes!! Fascinators are fun . . . if you forget your flower at home, pick one of your host's!

*See the next page for
AGM information....*



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

BOARD ELECTIONS:

President (One year term with a 2nd possibility): _____

Vice President (Term as for President): _____

Directors: Members at Large standing for election (Two year term): **Ron Martin, Judeen Hendrickson, Peter Lewis**

Directors: Members at Large continuing (Two year term): **Al Campbell, Siggi Kemmler**

Treasurer continuing: **Elaine Kitchen**

Secretary continuing: **Verna Buhler**

Past President (One year term): **Carrie Nelson**

NOTE: Nominations will also be accepted at the AGM

MEMBERSHIP DUES:

The membership will be voting to increase membership dues to \$45. The current fees are \$38. Due to the exchange rate with the US dollar, it is currently costing approximately \$40 Canadian to purchase our ARS membership alone. If the membership votes in favour of this increase, it will be in effect for the 2017 year. Membership fees for 2017 are payable no later than the November General Meeting.



R. 'Judy Judy Judy'

Hybridiser: Barlup, 1992

Elepidote Height: 2 ft.

Midseason H3

R. 'Peach Charm' x R. 'Pirouette'

Vancouver Island Spring Bus Tour

May 9 – 10, 2016

Despite the fact that he was the only gentleman of the ten travellers participating in the Vancouver Island Spring Garden Tour, our Tour Coordinator and Dodge Van Driver, Ian Efford, appeared to be able to relax and enjoy himself.



Ian with the Smiths (photo – Sharon Tillie)

At least he did so once, with Robert and Adele Smith in their fabulous acreage of rhododendrons in Courtney. With a broad grin, Robert, immediately on our arrival, offered his guests an alternative to walking---a quick look at the garden on his speedy golf cart. Adele smiled wryly, advising that the only way to feel safe was to continually point out the rhododendrons that required closer observations, and thereby, possibly, increasing the lap times that Robert was successfully reducing on each trip. Walking wasn't such a bad choice.

For those of us exploring on foot, it was helpful to have a map to negotiate the trails through the terraced gardens of mature and well-labeled rhododendrons. Despite the map and scurrying, some of us still didn't manage to visit all parts of the garden such as the nursery and vegetable gardens. We met Charlie, the Smith's gardener, who was fully

acknowledged for the care and ongoing development of their garden.

In this lovely setting, Ian may have been able to relax for those few moments because at that point there was one last garden to visit on the tour that he had so expertly designed. Or, perhaps he had simply resigned himself to the fact that meeting the outlined schedule had become futile, and that all the participants were thoroughly enjoying the adventure. So, if the ladies wanted to linger, then, well, a late lunch it would be!

The day before, our chatty group had left Duncan at 8:30 am in two vans. The Toyota Sienna, driven by Verna, missed Esther's pickup point near Chemainus and had to backtrack, immediately setting the tardiness pattern for Ian's carefully scheduled tour. Once again on track, Ian's plan included a drive-by of Mary Parker's former garden, before the visit to Mrs. Ellen Hailey's Rhododendron Garden in Bowen Park. The rhododendrons were in flower, towering, but unlabeled. Both offered an appropriate introduction.

Chris Southwick's garden was a delight. She pointed out some of her grandmother's rhododendron selections, including *R. bureauvii* Greig's form, and generously dug for us, some *primulas* we had all been admiring, thus beginning our plant collection project.



Chris Southwick with tour participants



***R. bureauvii* Greig's form**

Eswyn's Alpine and Rock Garden at Nanoose Place Community Center provided a sharp contrast to the other verdant gardens of rhododendrons on the tour. Here tiny plants demonstrated their particular strengths and resilience in dry, rugged conditions of a terraced and creviced terrain. It was also a perfect spot for lunch.

In Parksville, Doug Kitts' passion for gardening was evident in his densely planted, city-lot garden. Doug was kept very busy identifying the unique plants in his garden and explaining his propagation and hybridizing efforts to our group. Our typically talkative group moved quietly open-mouthed about, simply amazed at how Doug utilized every level of space so



Doug Kitts points out one of his own rhododendron crosses, which he hopes to see bloom one day soon.

effectively.

At Milner Gardens, the time Ian offered was "as long as the group wish[ed], usually at least one and one-half hours." Wandering through, under, and around mature tree-height rhododendrons in bloom, often without breathing, was refreshing. The "as long as" time period still ended more quickly than wanderers expected, especially since the plant purchases at the nursery had to be whisked up to the vehicles within that time allowance.

Once again in the vans, during the debriefing, and between choir practices, most of our group expressed surprise that the new species garden area was still in very early stages of development; the land had been cleared and appeared over exposed and barren at this time. Most of us had expected to see a planted area.

The Kingfisher Resort perfectly slipped Monday to sleep, and with a gentle morning nudge, also inspired the next day's activities.





Having experienced Chris Southwick's home, garden, and generosity, made the first drive-by in Royston the next morning that much more meaningful to any novices in our group. This was the original property and location of the Ted and Mary Greig nursery.

The first stop was Filberg Park in Comox. The group was able to stroll casually through the grounds of the old estate, inhaling the scents of mature rhododendrons and a long sturdy arbour of the intoxicating fragrance of wisteria.



Wisteria at Filberg Park (photo – Sharon Tillie)



View from Filberg Park (photo – Sharon Tillie)



Alliums (photo – Sharon Tillie)

Robert and Adele Smith's garden was what followed, where rhododendrons displayed their beauty, and Ian, following a harrowing cart ride through the winding trails of the garden, could finally relax.

When the women became hungry enough, they would finally leap into the vans, and find their way, using Ian's descriptive written instructions, to Paul Wurtz's home. Although the Toyota van navigator, Sharon, was tired and a touch too relaxed by then, she directed the group to the gate of Hidden Acres Rhododendron Nursery.

Ian served healthy salads on the shaded deck of Paul and Lynn Wurtz's; the deck was comfortably

cool surrounded as it was with tall trees, mature rhododendrons and healthy companion plants. After lunch, Lynn first led us through her prize garden pointing out a spectacular variety of shade garden plants, and then Paul presented a garden tour of the companion plants, his rhododendrons. Many of these were Lofthouse creations; Paul explained that he had been the fortunate person to inherit most of Lofthouse's rhododendrons. On the part of Lofthouse, it was a clearly a wise decision, as the rhododendrons were vigorous and colourful, and were going to continue to thrive and develop in the hands of Paul, who is dedicated to both propagating and hybridizing.



Mrs Smith with one of her hundreds of blossom-covered rhododendrons





Paul Wurtz with his favourite, R. 'Apricot Fantasy'
(photo – Sharon Tillie)

After the culminating experience of a brisk, highly informative tour and an equally intense shopping surge at Paul's nursery, the real pressure was on. Pack those plants in quickly, because the American model, Dodge Caravan, had to return to the Cowichan Valley directly to ensure connections with a Saltspring ferry.

The Toyota Sienna, normally close behind the Dodge, at least no more than an hour behind, was re-routed by its passengers. Reluctant to end the adventure, they unanimously voted to follow the winding narrow roads of the scenic route, and then pause

to stroll the private gardens of new friends and soul mates at drop-off points along the way.

The van returned to its home after closing hours, and if it experienced such sensitivities as those of its passengers, it would have parked fully fueled and re-energized, knowing it had participated in a worthwhile adventure.

Thank you, Ian, for a wonderful trip!!

The Women

Verna Buhler



R. 'Judy's Choice'

Hybridiser: Barlup, 2002

Elepidote Height: 4 ft.

Midseason H4

R. 'Hachman's Charmant' x R. 'Tia'

2015-16 Executive

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Directors at Large:
Joe Hudak, Siggie Kemmler, Alan Campbell

Convenors

Sunshine: Mary Gale

Tea: Judeen Hendricksen

Raffle: Hilda Gerrits

Club Liaison: Alan Campbell

Library: Joyce Rodger

Membership Recruitment: Peter Lewis

Program Co-ordinator: Sandra Stevenson, Alan Campbell

History: Ian Efford

Garden Tours: Peter Lewis

CV Garden Fair: The Team

Facility Liaison: Roy Elvins

Christmas Party: The Team

Bus Tours: Vacant

Species Garden Reps: Siggie Kemmler, Alan Campbell

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