



NEWSLETTER

Volume 22:3 Editor: Ian E. Efford and Siggi Kemmler March 2011

President's Message

My, but February is a short month! It is nice to see so many bulbs poking their heads through the dirt and starting to put on a spring display. Those at the last meeting will remember that the Webbs brought a branch of their Rhododendron 'Olive' and showed how it was nicely blooming. My plant remained in bud until mid-month before it started to open up. Victoria certainly is a little farther ahead of us. The flowers may think that spring is coming, but with the weather we have been having (some snow, some warm days, some very frosty nights, and some very heavy rains) I begin to wonder.

The Plant Sale is starting to come together. The invitations have been sent to the growers and the venue of the Cowichan Exhibition has been finalized. An organizational meeting was held recently to see what has been done and what still needs to be done. A thank you needs to go out to Bill Dumont for all the work that he has done so far. Speaking of Bill, for those of you interested in his bus tour in May, have you got your deposit to him yet? His trips fill up fast.

Some members of the Executive are setting up a Nomination Committee to find members who are willing to fill various positions for 2011/2012. The Committee needs to have a 'slate' presented to the membership in April to be voted on at the May meeting. If approached by someone, give some serious thought to becoming involved. If you want to volunteer, contact me or Sharon Tillie.

See you at the meeting.

David Annis



Olive

Coming Events

2nd of March, **Dick Beamish:**

"A Walk Through my Garden"

6th of April, Norma Senn: "Rhododendron Gardens of the South Island of New Zealand"

April 30th, Plant Sale and Garden Show at the Cowex, 10am - 2pm

4th May, Siggi Kemmler and Ken Webb
"Rhododendron Nurseries in Germany"

Also remember the Annual Picnic in June

Dick Beamish

Many plant lovers have noticed rhododendrons blooming along Hammond Bay Road in Nanaimo. The most frequent sightings are in the garden of Dick and Ann Beamish. They have a well-established garden on the waterfront with many large rhododendrons and some exotics, such as bananas and loquats. Even very early in the year, Rhodos "Lee's Scarlet" and "Nobleanum coccineum", a witch hazel and some sasanqua camellias are blooming.

Dick will be guiding the audience for "A Walk Through My Garden" at our March meeting. Take this opportunity to learn about his experience with rhododendron varieties that can bring cheer to winter days, as well as those that brighten our lives at more traditional times.

Dick can also share his experience in pushing the limits of our climate zone. If you have questions about growing rhododendrons or exotics, He has decades of local experience to help provide the answers.

The Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society

A Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society

P.O. Box 904, Duncan, British Columbia, V9L 3Y3 <http://cowichan.rhodos.ca>

Dick and Ann will have their garden open for the Nanaimo club's garden tour later this spring, so this is a good chance to get a preview. In his day job, Dick is



a world-renowned fisheries scientist and a former director of the Pacific Biological Station. He is a member of the Order of Canada.

On the Subject of *Phytophthora*

Ian Wright, in correspondence from Cornwall in England, wrote "On the subject of *Phytophthora*... what a year... Larch is a major host only being found in 2009 and now over 3,000 ha of Larch is infected and will be felled, ...massive impact in the UK. The disease seems to sporulate profusely on Larch needles for as yet unknown reasons so my predictions are coming true."



From the Editor

There is a steady flow of articles coming in for the newsletter, but very few from our own members. Perhaps you could write about something that is of interest, either a problem you have or a plant in your garden, or even a neighbour's garden, that you find particularly attractive.

The article about the Shephard's garden in Port McNeill is one of the series about public gardens on the island which have significant rhododendron collections. There are about three more of these articles to come and the total will be 18 unless you can let me know of other gardens that I have missed. At the moment, plans are underway to have these articles brought together in a single publication that will be ready for the 2012 ARS Conference in Nanaimo.

Recently, I visited one of these gardens, Playfair Park in Saanich. I was astonished to find that this park contains a collection of hundreds of rhododendrons, some nearly 6m high. This week, one is just about to flower, and I would imagine that in April and May will be the most spectacular display. You should make the effort to visit as it is readily accessible. Just go into Victoria and turn left on Mackenzie as if going to the airport. Do not turn off onto the Pat Bay highway but keep on over the hill to Quadra. Turn right on Quadra and near the top of the hill, on the left is Union Street, take one of the next three streets on the left (Palmer, Glenora, Rock); they all end up at the park. Glenora is the best as it is near the top of the park and has a large parking lot. If you have young children, it also has a good playground. I should note that this park is also part of the Garry Oak reserve system in Saanich and will have a significant display of wildflowers at the same time as the rhodos are blooming. There is also an extensive perennial garden. Pictures of these flowers can be seen at <http://www.saanich.ca/parkrec/parks/info/playfair.html>. In the next issue of the newsletter, I will reprint an article about the history of the park.

Finally, I press on with the newsletter with little input from the readers! If it is not to your liking, please let me know. I read other newsletters and some have a lot of social commentary about the members and crafts, and others seem very keen on recipes. I tend towards the scientific end of the spectrum and, based on experience, leave all cooking to my wife. If on the other hand, you want recipes, then you have to tell me and also come up with a sub-editor who will look after that aspect. Alternatively, you could read the newsletter of other societies that are available on our district website. Speak up - I cannot hear you!

Ian E. Efford, Editor

efford@shaw.ca

SHEPHARD'S GARDEN Port McNeill

Marilyn Shephard and Joe Shephard

It was 20 years ago this spring that Bill and I moved out from Port McNeill to our newly purchased "stump ranch" along the Nimpkish River. The original owners, the Nicholsons, obtained this four acre, heavily treed plot through the Land Lover's Association. Their horses, chickens and pot belly pigs were slowly replaced with flowerbeds, a large vegetable garden, fruit trees and berries. Each subsequent year we've added a wider variety of zone-friendly perennials and bulbs. In November 2005 my husband sadly passed away, but I have been blessed with son Joe, who now lives here, and does a lot of the heavy work on the weekends.

There were three rhododendrons growing here when we came. Now, we have rhodos and azaleas planted in almost every bed to give structure. Late spring finds one after another covered with blooms, a spectacular showing. We've put a number of rhododendrons along the trail to the river. They are very healthy, but so far are not ready to bloom. A few years ago we planted shoots from two half wild rhododendrons found in the Old Quatsino settlement along Quatsino Sound. These bushes have the most vigorous growth of any rhododendron I've ever seen. The acidic soil and mild climate of the north island make it a fantastic place to grow rhododendrons.



Shephard's Garden has continuous flowers from the snowdrops and witch hazel in February, to the Rudbeckia and dahlias in the fall. My favourite plant seems to be whatever is blooming that week! I do wish, though, that more folks would come to enjoy the spring bulbs. Some weeks the deer seem to outnumber the visitors. This is why, in recent years, we have planted many more daffodil species than tulips, and put the vegetables behind seven foot fencing.

We are open year round from 10:00-4:00. Entry

to the garden is by donation. Check out our two-tonne baby "inukshuk" (which I think still needs a head)! Visitors can always sample, in season, our raspberries, strawberries, blueberries, or even the peas. A leisurely walk down the forest trail to the Nimpkish River is cool, even on the warmest summer day. We are pleased to have a few old-growth trees and often otters and eagles can be seen.



To get to the garden, follow the signage on Highway 19, turning off the highway five miles south of Port McNeill. There are many fine restaurants in Port McNeill, Port Hardy, and out at Telegraph Cove in the summer.

Shephard's Garden is a good place to visit when you travel to Vancouver Island North for whale watching, hiking, or to go salmon fishing. Learn more about the island's history in the local museums and interpretative centres.



You are always very welcome at Shephard's Gardens.
250-956-4709 jwshck@telus.net



Phytosanitation Certificates at the ARS Convention in Vancouver, Washington State

Yes, we will have a Washington State Department of Agriculture inspector at the convention on Saturday only and he will manually write the phytos. He charges \$51 an hour plus mileage. Hopefully, the attendees that need phytos will be willing to help defray the costs by giving a few dollars each. We will need to assemble purchases in a holding area until the inspector writes the phytos and purchasers will need to fill out applications before the inspector arrives.

There are some plants that we cannot include in the phyto process. No conifers may be included and no plants that come from outside the convention plant sale may be included..

We are very much looking forward to seeing our Canadian friends in May.

Maria Stewart, Plant Sale Chairman 2011 ARS Convention

Leaf Curl

Diana Scott

President, North Island Rhododendron Society

As the temperatures dip below freezing I watch the garden take on the frosty hues of winter. The Rhodos in our garden sustain winter damage from time to time, but usually ‘weather’ the mild cold that we typically get here on the coast. Over the past few winters we’ve had some pretty COLD spells, which may be the beginning of a nippier trend in years to come.

Looking out our window at the garden, we can usually tell how cold it is by the curl and droop of the Rhodo leaves! Folks new to Rhodo growing may not be aware that the sight of droopy, shriveled-looking leaves on their favourite Rhodo is an appropriate protective response to the drop in temperature. Rhodos that are cold-hardy seem to show more leaf movement than those that are not. Biologist Erik Tallak Nilsen in his research paper “Why Do Rhododendron Leaves Curl?” helps to explain his view of this interesting phenomenon. <http://arnoldia.arboretum.harvard.edu/pdf/articles/796.pdf>

Nilsen begins by crediting Charles Darwin for first categorizing leaf movements in his book “The Power of Movement in Plants” published in 1880. Darwin reported that many plant parts, particularly leaves, move in response to both environmental and

physiological factors. The key factors are light intensity, light direction, water content, and temperature. The leaves of plants in hot, dry environments respond to temperature by moving upward to avoid excess light absorption. In contrast, many Rhodo leaves droop downward and curl inward in response to cold temperatures.

According to the research described in Nilsen’s article, the droop and the curl are two distinct phenomena, both serving to protect the leaf from cold damage. Thermotropic (temperature related) leaf movements have been commonly thought to be a mechanism to prevent leaf desiccation or loss of water during cold periods or a way for the plant to shed snow, but Nilsen’s research does not support these theories. The droop and curl seem to be related more to the protection of the cell membranes from the effects of freezing. The leaf drooping is controlled by hydration of the leaf stalk or petiole, and the downward angle this produces may serve to protect the leaf from membrane damage due to strong sunlight and cold temperatures.

The inward curl appears to be a response to leaf temperature (as opposed to air temperature) which reduces the amount of leaf area exposed to light, preventing cell damage by slowing the rate of thaw. Most damage caused by leaf freezing is a result of ice crystals piercing the cellular membranes, followed by too rapid a rate of re-warming. Drooping and curling may both reduce the area exposed to sunlight thus slow the rate of re-warming after a period of cold. Leaf movement seems to be a significant factor in determining cold hardiness in rhododendrons.

Despite what it looks like in your garden, the Rhodos that appear the most shriveled may very well be the ones that are taking the cold weather in stride! I hope that over the upcoming months you will be taking our cold winter temperatures in stride along with your Rhodos!

Reprinted from North Island Rhododendron Society Jan 2011 newsletter Photos by Diana Scott





PJM one of the early ones

List of CVRS Past Presidents & Vice Presidents

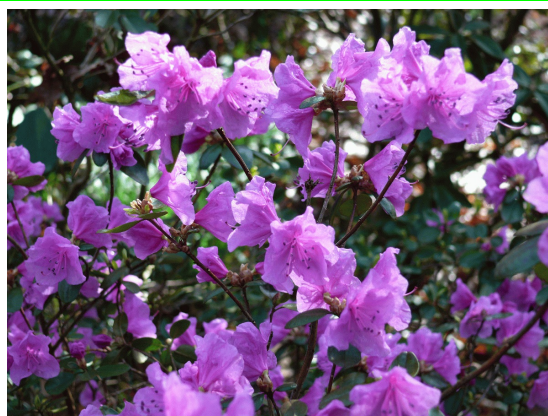
	President	Vice-President
1989	Kathy Millar	Stan Groves
1990	Stan Groves	Fred Collins
1991	Stan Groves	Dave Dougan
1992	Stan Groves	Peter Kearns
1993	Allan Murray	Charles Raymond
1994	Allan Murray	Charles Raymond
1995	Charles Raymond	Ingeborg Woodsworth
1996	Charles Raymond	Margaret DeWeese
1997	Margaret DeWeese	Janet Gardner
1998	Margaret DeWeese	Janet Gardner
1999	Janet Gardner	Joyce Gammie
2000	Janet Gardner	Joyce Gammie
2001	Ian Anderson	Alan Campbell
2002	Ian Anderson	Alan Campbell
2003	Alan Campbell	Leslie Drew
2004	Alan Campbell	Leslie Drew
2005	Alan Campbell	Ingeborg Woodsworth
2006	Ingeborg Woodsworth	Ian E. Efford
2007	Ingeborg Woodsworth	Ian E. Efford
2008	David Annis	Alan Campbell
2009	David Annis	Alan Campbell
2010	David Annis	Ian E. Efford

2010 - 11 Directors

President	David Annis
Vice President	Ian E. Efford
2 nd Vice President	TBA
Treasurer	Dave Dumont
Secretary at gen. mtgs.	TBA
at executive meetings	Siggi Kemmler
Members at Large	Sharon Tillie Charlie Nelson Bernie Dinter Judeen Hendrickson

2010 - 11 Conveners

Librarian	Elaine Kitchen
Garden Tours	Sharon Tillie
Spring Sale	the CVRS Team
Club Liason	Alan Campbell
Raffle	Hilda Gerrits
Membership	Sandra Stevenson
Speakers	the Executive
Tea Coordinator	Carrie Nelson
Website	TBA
Historian	Mona Kaiser
Propagation	Alan Campbell
Sunshine	Mary Gale
Editor	Ian Efford



R. mucronulatum, another early beauty



AIS Convention May 29th- June 3rd
British Columbia, Canada
www.bc-iris.org

American Iris Society 2011 National Convention

*Ted Baker, Chair Jan Hemming, Secretary 250-653-4430 / tedebaker@shaw.ca
250-655-1063 / nitinat.shaw.ca*

From the BC Iris Society:

An *IRIS —istible* invitation to the members of your Garden Club

The American IRIS Society National convention is coming to The Empress Hotel in Victoria BC May 29 to June 3' 2011; it will feature IRIS hybridizers from across the North American continent and as far away as Slovakia.

This week-long event includes meetings on different iris classifications and garden tours all requiring pre-registration. A *Schedule* of events and *Registration* for participation can be found at: [www .bc-iris .org/ AiS2011Convention.htm](http://www.bc-iris.org/AiS2011Convention.htm)

In preparation for this convention, the BC IRIS Society has planted competition iris rhizomes at Royal Roads University (Hatley Park), Glendale Gardens and Woodland, Finnerty Gardens at University of Victoria and Government House Gardens. Open for general interest will be a Simulated Flower Show on Wednesday, June 1, from 5:30 to 10:30 pm.

The BC IRIS Society is also hosting the Iris Boutique and Marketplace - a retail space accessed just to the right by the Empress Hotel's main lobby entrance. This Boutique and Marketplace will feature arts and crafts of a floral nature: paintings, placemats, jewellery, food stuffs and other exciting items for sale. The Boutique and Marketplace is open to the general public at no cost.

Opening times will be Monday May 30 from 4 to 7 pm; Tuesday 10 am to 5 pm; Wednesday and Thursday noon to 8 pm; Friday 8 am to noon. Let's see garden club members there *en masse*. It will be a great show.

For more information call Val Smith at 250-598-3385 or email valsmith@island.net