



The **Rhodoholic**



Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society

Volume 27:2 March 2016

President's Message

What will March bring? I am betting more of the same mild and wet weather, which has already brought on a bit of Spring fever (not spring cleaning quite yet.) There is nothing like getting one's hands into soil to lift one's spirits and to put all the craziness of the world into perspective. The rhododendron buds are swelling nicely and R. Snow Lady is about to burst.

I had relative success with cuttings of rhodos I took from my garden and from Anne Slaby's garden in the Fall. I used a 50/50 mix of peat and perlite with a rooting hormone for most and I experimented with a natural fibre cube for others. The peat/perlite has



CVRS Monthly Meeting

Wednesday, March 2

7:30pm St. John's Church

Biodiversity in the Garden:

Doug Justice, Associate

Director and Curator of

Collections at UBC Botanical
Garden

In This Issue:

March Matters 3

It's Happening in CVRS
Member Gardens 7

Spotting, Discoloration or
Dead Areas on Plants 8

A Photo Gallery of Gardens
in Ireland 11

Mad Honey Hunters of Nepal
15

2015-16 Coming Events 17

CVRS Rhodos Available
Spring 2016 19

Member Profile: Anne Slaby
21

Note from the Editor 24

2015-16 Executive &
Convenors 25

provided a better outcome. The cubes worked well with *Crinodendron hookerianum* cuttings; the rhodos in the cubes look healthy but only callouses have formed, no roots. At the Feb meeting the members voted in favour of funding a portable propagator. Experimenting with different growing mediums, natural or artificial light, using bottom or no heat are all things the propagation members of the club are engaged in. All members are welcome to get involved and share their results.

March is also a great time to pot up perennials such as hostas, brunnera, hellebores, pulmonarias, or any other companion plants for donation to the Garden Fair, April 30th. Check your rhodos and azaleas to see if you have any branches that have layered and grown roots. These can be dug up and potted as well. Last year the CVRS table raised approximately \$3000 from member-donated plants. Let's see if we can do the same this year. As well, there are many opportunities, and a real need, for members to become involved with the Fair as volunteers. The more the merrier, particularly for setting up on April 29th, and on the day of

the fair, April 30th. The roster of vendors at the Garden Fair is shaping up nicely. Check it out at the Fair website:

www.cowichanvalleygardenfair.com. Where the growers have a website, we have included them so you can check out their stock on-line.

Away from gardening and on to Board news: The new BC Society Act comes into effect November 2016. The CVRS is required to review and update the Constitution and Bylaws to comply with the Act. The Cowichan Volunteer Society is hosting orientation workshops for Board members. As soon as I have dates I will let the membership know. If you are a board member, or have an interest in becoming a board member, this will be a workshop you will not want to miss!

Also, I encourage members to submit articles and photos to the Newsletter Editor: Verna Buhler at vlbuhler@shaw.ca for the April issue.

I look forward to seeing you at the next meeting, March 2nd.

Carrie Nelson, President



Crinodendron hookerianum

March Matters

Tasks attended to in March contribute to the health of the rhododendrons in your gardens. These tips are offered by a number of the experienced members of our club.

Check your rhododendron plants for:

Damaging effects of winter weather:

- Drainage: Plentiful rain may have created boggy sections in lower areas of your property – Consider improving drainage from this area, or lifting the rhododendron so its roots are above of the soggy soil
- Broken, damaged, and dead branches – Remove these to prevent further damage and disease; the February issue of The Rhodoholic included an article on pruning (Furniss, How and When to Prune Rhododendrons)

Mulching materials that are suffocatingly close to the trunk or stem of the rhododendron - Pull back mulch to at least six to eight inches away from the trunk

Rhododendrons that are planted too deeply – Pull soil away from the trunk. You may need to dig around the plant and lift it above the soil level in the garden bed.

Damaged leaves of the plants, and identify any plant problems early - Careful analysis will allow you to prepare solutions in a timely manner throughout the year:

- Spotting, Discoloration, or Dead Areas on Plants - See the article in this issue
- Missing Portions of Leaves – Weevils, Caterpillars, Sawflies
- Curling, Distortion, or Misshapen Plant Parts
- Powdery, Granular, or Other Unusual Material On Leaves and/or Stems
- Dieback, Total Decline, or Poor Performance

Nutrient Needs

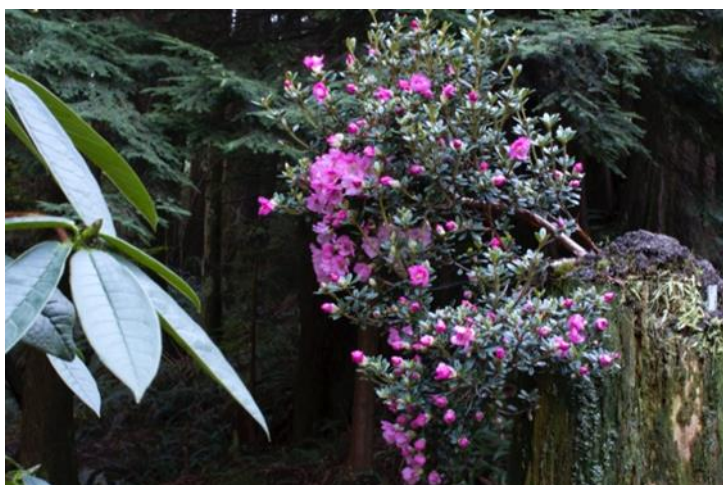
Coastal rains tend to leach nutrients from the soil. Apply Epsom salts and fertilizers as needed – See recipes of the magic potions applied by some of your fellow members, on the pages following.

On Drainage

Look at how rhododendrons grow in the wild and act accordingly when looking after them in cultivation. They grow on steep hillsides, which provide perfect drainage during the monsoon rains, which occur from May to October in the Himalayas. Their roots are constantly bathed with fresh water from these monsoon rains.

Unfortunately, we have a Mediterranean climate with wet winters and “dryish” summers, which is the opposite of the Himalayan climate in which rhododendrons are happiest. We have to ensure that our cultivated plants have a similar environment. When we plant them they have to be in well-drained soil with sufficient summer watering. Daily summer watering is optimal and if that is too difficult to achieve then water as much as possible. Water is essential to rhododendrons in the summer months. Scotland has a Himalayan climate with wet summers and dry winters and is the reason that rhododendrons grow so well there.

Sean Rafferty



R. dendrocharis (left) and *R. petrocharis* (right) thriving in well-drained sites in stumps of trees
(Sean Rafferty photos)

“...THE HAPPIEST RHODO IS ONE THAT HAS JUST BEEN MOVED”

(with thanks, from Mary Greig . . .to Al Campbell . . .to us)

The reason:

The replanted rhodo has been placed higher out of compacted soil, therefore having better drainage and air flow past the roots. Also, the amended soil would have an increased level of nutrients.

On Nutrients

Both Al Campbell and Sean Rafferty offer their rhododendrons a mixture of MgSO₄, magnesium sulphate, (Epsom salts), at this time of the year.

Then, a little later in March, Al adds a little fertilizer, using 'Al Murray's Mix'.

Early Season Plant Nutrients

Sean Rafferty mixes a handful of **Epsom salts** and a tablespoon (approx.) of **chelated iron** (*chelated* meaning that it will dissolve in water) into a two-gallon watering can and applies this at this time of the year.

The Epsom salts will increase the pH. level of the soil and help roots absorb nutrients more easily.

The iron helps leaves create chlorophyll for photosynthesis.



If you prefer organic fertilizer to chemical:

Alan Murray has the answer for you with his special formula, which one can see has proven to be very effective in his mountain-side garden in the Duncan area.

Al Murray's Mix:

4 parts each of alfalfa meal, canola meal, and blood meal. . .plus
2 parts dolomite lime. . .and
1 part each of rock phosphate, bone meal, kelp meal, and greensand

Apply this mixture only ONCE A YEAR!!

Rose Rogan's Rhododendron Planting Mix

Rose Rogan, owner of Perennial Ridge Nursery, usually prepares an 8-yard mix, but has broken her recipe down into a 1-yard quantity to make it easier for all.

- 1 yard fine bark mulch
- 1 1/2 bales of peat
- 8 pound nutricote (14-14-14)
- 1 pound superphosphate
- 1 pound trace elements
- 1 pound dolomite lime.

"When I make my big 8-yard mix, I spread the bark and peat out on a big cement slab. Next, I apply all the fertilizers on top. Then I rototill it 3 times over, until fully mixed; so with the one yard mix, it could be done by hand on a driveway slab or such."

Rose Rogan



Rose's rhododendron propagation window-house

This month in The Rhodoholic we are featuring azaleas and rhodos that begin with the letter G.

Azalea 'Glacier'

Evergreen Azalea

Flower white with faint greenish tone, single, funnel-shaped, 2½" to 3" across. Inflorescence 2-3 flowered. A midseason bloomer. Evergreen leaves glossy, dark green. Erect to spreading habit. Vigorous grower. Grows to a height of about 5 ft. in 10 yrs. Cold hardy to -21°C (-5°F)

Hybridized by Morrison.

RHS Award Winner 2016

North West USA Region



It's Happening in CVRS Member Gardens

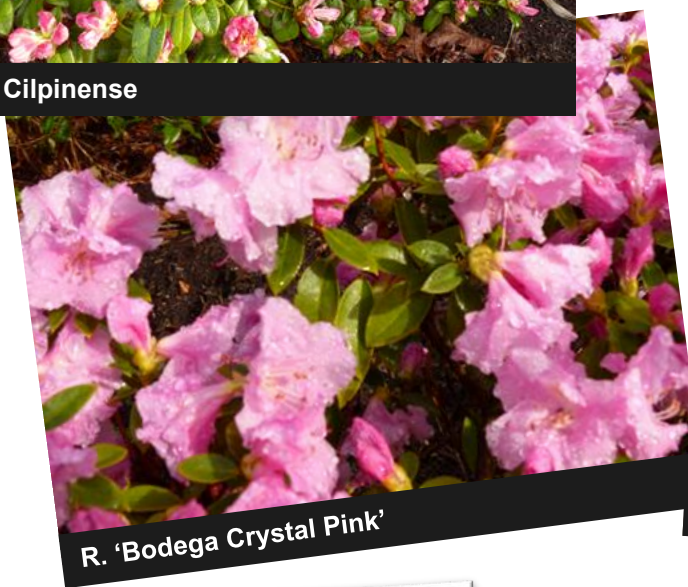


R. Cilpinense



R. 'Snow Sprite'

In Joe Hudak's Garden, February 15



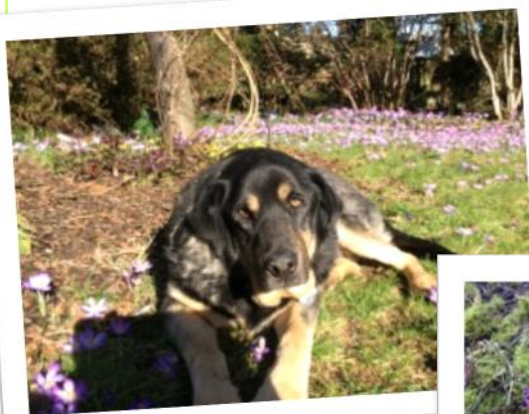
R. 'Bodega Crystal Pink'



R. 'Lee's Scarlet'

In Sandra Stevenson's Garden, February

Chopper and Ki are wondering when the deciduous azaleas are going to bloom!



SPOTTING, DISCOLORATION, OR DEAD AREAS ON PLANT PARTS

Physiological Leaf Spot



Fig. 1. Physiological leaf spot. Note diffuse blotches on leaves.

Symptoms: Various colored (generally dark purple), discrete or diffuse spots, discoloration and blotches occur on leaves as a result of environmental and cultural stress (*Fig. 1*). Some varieties (Mrs. G.W. Leak) are known for their spots.

Cause: Actual causes are not known. If the problem is severe or persistent, consider replacing the rhododendron with a more desirable variety.

Fungus Leaf Spot



Fig.2. Fungus leaf spot. Several species of fungi cause this disease.

Symptoms: Spots are irregular in size and color (*Fig. 2*). Some have red-brown borders with silvery gray centers. Very small black dots (fruiting structures of fungi) are sometimes visible in the center of the spot or in concentric rings. These fungi commonly enter through wounds.

Cause: The fungi *Phyllosticta*, *Septoria*, *Pestalotia* are commonly the causal agents of this malady. Remove and destroy affected leaves. Spray with a registered fungicide after flowering and repeat at 10 - 14 day intervals until dry weather begins. It is usually advisable to apply a spreader-sticker with the fungicide to hold the fungicide on the leaves during rains.

Iron or Manganese Deficiency



Symptoms: Marked yellowing (chlorosis) of leaf parts, primarily between veins of new leaves. The yellowing (from very pale yellow to intense bright yellow) will vary with severity of the symptoms and the cause (*Fig. 3*).

Causes:

1. An overly alkaline soil (should have a pH of 4.5 - 6.0).
2. **Lack of sufficient iron or manganese in the soil (uncommon).**
3. Lack of sufficient air space and/or lack of good drainage (soil constantly waterlogged or compacted).
4. **Excessive amounts of some herbicides may cause similar symptoms**



Fig. 4. Sunscald on rhododendron leaves

Symptoms: Brown, indistinct blotches of varying degrees, originating mostly on the central portions of the top leaves. Symptoms are usually more severe on the south and southwest side of the plant and on leaves oriented perpendicular to the sun.

Cause: Heat and/or sunscald symptoms develop rapidly after a hot spell with intense sunlight (*Fig. 4*). Plant a sun tolerant rhododendron or provide partial shade. Cooling the foliage with water on the hottest afternoons may help temporarily.

Symptoms: Marginal yellowing of leaves; may be followed by browning (necrosis) (*Fig. 5a*).

Cause: Root problems are caused by poor drainage, disease, soil compaction, heavy clay soils, being buried too deeply in the planting hole, or by mulch buildup. Early symptoms include yellowing and wilting of new growth and irregular yellowing along margins of older leaves. Roots need abundant air spaces to function properly.



Fig. 5a. Marginal yellowing and browning can indicate problems with the roots.



Fig. 5b. Leaf yellowing caused by wet feet.

Nitrogen Deficiency/Wet Feet Symptoms: Overall yellowing of leaves, generally more prevalent on older or lower leaves (*Fig. 5b*).

Causes:

1. *Nitrogen deficiency.* Lack of nitrogen, or available nitrogen, as nitrogen may be tied up in decomposing organic matter such as sawdust in the soil around the plant.
2. *Wet feet.* An early symptom of poor drainage is yellowing and wilting of newly emerging growth. If the plant is wilted and the soil is very wet, there is probably a root problem or insufficient air space and/or drainage in the soil.



Fig. 5c. Root rot response. Could be mistaken for cold injury, so be certain to check all aspects mentioned in text.

Root rots: Leaves (Fig. 5c) wilt (roll downward), turn yellow, and eventually the plant dies. Dead leaves remain attached to the plant. Small, fibrous roots rot first. Rot progresses to large roots, and finally, the entire root system and lower stems develop a brown discoloration. The fungus *Phytophthora cinnamomi* is a common cause of root rot, but other species of *Phytophthora* and other fungi can also be responsible. Poorly drained soil can also be responsible as roots suffocate in water and are then invaded by rot organisms. Remove and destroy infected plant. Do not re-plant into the same hole. To avoid root rots, provide good soil drainage, maintain proper nutrition and soil pH, and purchase healthy plants from reputable outlets. Several effective fungicides are available for use in greenhouses and nurseries.

Stem diseases: In contrast to root rots, where the entire plant is affected, diseases causing stem dieback usually only affect some of the twigs and branches, while others will appear normal. Two fungi, *Phytophthora* and *Botryosphaeria*, are common causes of this problem. Reddish brown to black sunken cankers develop and girdle the stem. Leaves and stems above the canker, wilt and die. Diseased stems should be pruned out well below the cankered area. The prunings should be destroyed and the pruning shears disinfected. Applications of an appropriate fungicide may also be helpful.

Broken branches: Branches are sometimes accidentally broken by animals, or people, resulting in dead spots in the plant canopy. Look closely at such symptoms to be certain the cause is properly diagnosed.

Planted too deep: If rhododendrons are planted too deep, the symptoms on the plant will be similar to lack of drainage with reduced top growth, smaller yellow leaves, and a possibility of developing root rots. Frequently, shrubs planted at the proper depth (crown even with the soil) will sink lower as the loosened soil in the planting hole begins to settle. Adding mulches year after year may also bury roots too deeply.



Azalea 'Girard's Fuschia'

Evergreen Azalea

Flower moderate to deep purplish-red with moderate purplish-red spots, reverse deep purplish-pink, broadly funnel-shaped, wavy lobes, 2½" to 3" across. Inflorescence 3 flowered. Blooms midseason. Leaves narrowly obovate to elliptic, apiculate apex, narrowly cuneate base, 1¾" long, glossy, moderate yellowish olive green. Broad plant habit. Grows to a typical height of 4 ft in 10 years. Cold hardy to -26°C (-15°F).

Hybridized by Girard

RHS Award Winner 2011

North West USA Region

A Photo Gallery of Gardens in Ireland

In June 2015, we travelled to a number of public and private gardens in Ireland. In this article, I will share photos, and for the purpose of newsletter space, have given only a brief description of the gardens.

Sandra Stevenson



The Office of Public Works (OPW) operates the public gardens in Ireland. This government ministry is currently responsible for conserving and maintaining 740 national monuments and historic properties. This includes over twenty houses, parks and gardens.



While staying in Dublin we travelled, by public transport, to the **National Botanic Garden of Dublin**. This 48-acre site is situated five km. north of the center of Dublin in the neighborhood of Glasnevin. It was founded in 1795 by the Royal Dublin Society. Historically, this garden was significant for research in agriculture, medicine and dyeing. It was one of the first locations in Ireland to identify the infection responsible

for the 1845-47 potato famine. Research to stop the infection was carried out here during the crisis.

The Garden was immaculately maintained and displayed the perfect framework to show off the numerous Glasshouses that are architectural marvels. The construction of these Curvilinear Range Houses began in 1848 by Richard Turner. The Great Palm House was added in 1862 to protect the numerous collections of plants arriving from tropical areas. To house some of the now 15,000 species growing at these impressive gardens the greenhouses have gone through extensive updating and rebuilding over the years. This spectacular setting showed off a fine selection of Vireyas and tender Rhododendrons among numerous other col-



lections including Cactus, Orchids, Ferns, and a stunning display of Sarracenia. All plants presented as if each had an individual caretaker.



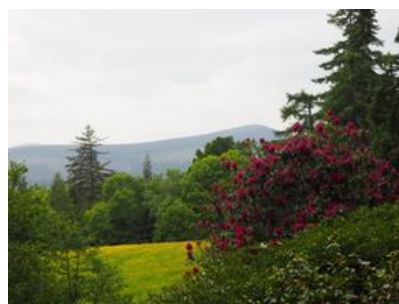


The soil in the Glasnevin area is alkaline clay, which restricts the cultivation of acid loving plants belonging to the Ericaceae family. The soil was specially prepared with peat in the areas growing Rhododendrons and Azaleas. Therefore the Rhododendron Garden, though mature was not extensive. The Rose Garden was in full glory in mid-June and the herbaceous border provided glimpses of summer treasures to come.

Our next garden stop was **Powercourt Estate**, 30 km south of Dublin. This 48-acre estate has a 13th century castle and extensive gardens. It is a private commercial affair owned and run by the Slazinger Family and provides employment for over 300 residents from the nearby village of Enniskerry.

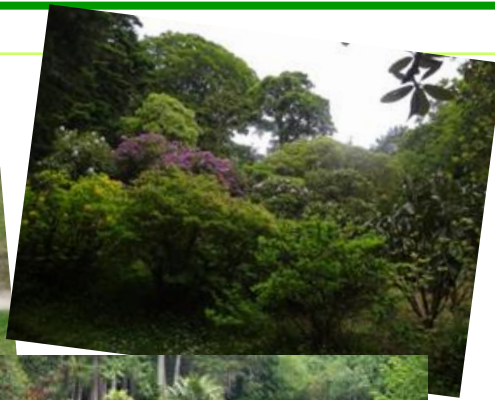


The influence of the Italianate style of gardens of the Palace of Versailles and Schonbrunn Palace, Vienna, are appreciated when looking over the expansive garden views from Powercourt's castle. The terraces look over a stunning view of Triton Lake with a backdrop



of Sugarloaf Mountain completing the scene. Our garden meandering began in the walled garden, and after strolling through one of Ireland's largest herbaceous borders, we continued on a woodland walk where we viewed numerous large old rhododendrons in a natural woodland setting. This also formed the backdrop for the pet cemetery with its old headstones and interesting captions acknowledging the lives of former dogs, cats and farm animals raised over the past few hundred years. The canopy of Beech, Douglas-fir, Corsican Pine and Giant Redwood trees planted over the past two centuries towered over the gardens.





The Japanese Gardens, included azaleas, Japanese maples and Chinese fortune palms set around a Grotto, one of the oldest features of the gardens. Another of the main attractions, along with Triton Lake and its winged horses, is the Tower Valley with the towering Pepperpot surrounded by 200 year old conifers and giant rhododendrons. From the 25- year old beech-tree-lined avenue that greeted us on arrival, to the hundreds of varieties of trees that have been planted over the past few centuries, the arboretum is a magnificent collection of species from around the world.



Our next stop was **Altamont Gardens** in Carlow County. This Estate was taken over by the OPW following the death of the former owner Corona North in 1999. The history of the house dates back 500 years. The 16-acre garden was planted in the Robinsonian style and was a delight to explore. William Robinson (1838 - 1935) was an Irish born garden designer and writer. His influential writings were published in ***The Wild Garden**** in 1870 and ***The English Garden*** in 1883. This began the Robinson Revolution and shaped the attitudes and style of many garden designers of the day including Gertrude Jekyll. The herbaceous borders and cottage garden designs were influenced by this naturalistic planting and free-flowing style.

The formal gardens surround the house and show a typical formal Victorian rigidity, though quickly drift down into a tranquil woodland walk. The boundary between the formal gardens and woodland walk is well blended. The forest plantings emphasize the native shrubs and trees and the natural and relaxed style of planting is the perfect habitat for the many mature rhododendrons planted around the lake and beyond. This Robinson inspired design is a delight to stroll through.

**The Wild Garden has been reprinted numerous times over the past 140 years. Most recently by Rick Dark in 2009.*



Sandra is willing to continue this account of the beautiful landmarks and gardens of Ireland in future issues of The Rhodoholic, and therefore we can look forward to travelling with her again soon. . .

'Mad Honey' Hunters of Nepal

The contents of this article relies almost entirely on Ben Taub's "Why do Some Bees Produce Hallucinogenic Honey", November 2015, and Claire Asher's "These Himalayan Bees Make Psychedelic Honey", October 2015



Thank you to Peter Lewis, for the suggestion to "just watch the video, and then you'll see." The documentary is approximately 26 minutes in length and definitely worth watching! Hallucinogen Honey Hunters takes viewers on a rarely glimpsed journey to a region in Nepal, the home of an isolated tribe known as the Gurung, and observes the culture surrounding this mystical honey.

It is easy to understand the interest bees have in rhododendron flowers, having watched the frenzy at rhododendron sales, where rhododendron enthusiasts have mapped out their pursuit route for the rare and the favourite. In some cases, they have assigned entire families to charge and gather.

Deep in the forests of the Himalayas, the World's largest bee is making psychedelic honey. So precious is this honey, that many locals in China and Nepal risk their lives to harvest and sell it to wealthy Asian men and curious tourists.

'Mad honey', also known as red honey, is produced by the Himalayan cliff bee (*Apis dorsata laboriosa*). The largest bee in the world, at just over 3cm long, is the highland subspecies of a relatively common bee, *Apis dorsata*. For a short period each spring, the highland species has access to the Rhododendron flowers that make its honey mad.

Many Rhododendron species and other plants in the Ericaceae family contain grayanotoxins, which is

why they are widely known to be poisonous to humans. In the highlands of the Himalayas; Bhutan, Yunnan (China), India, and Nepal, the rare Himalayan cliff bee lives alongside Rhododendron luteum and Rhododendron ponticum, and frequently collects nectar from their poisonous flowers. By gathering nectar from the rhododendrons that come into bloom at this time of



year, they infuse their sugary produce with certain toxins that cause a range of interesting effects when ingested by humans.



Rhododendron ponticum

'Mad honey' has properties, both pleasant and harmful, due to the grayanotoxins in it. Although, it is sought after for its supposed medicinal properties, eating large quantities can cause dizziness, hallucinations, nausea, and a range of cardiac effects. It is believed by some to be an aphrodisiac. Despite the honey's traditional use in folk medicine, the curative

effects of have not been confirmed by scientific studies. In fact, stories of harsh lessons learned are also recounted. In 67 BC, King Mithridates' army left chunks of mad honey out for the Roman enemy to find; the Roman army, then, was easily defeated whilst tripping!

However, because of its intoxicating and medicinal effects, 'mad honey' fetches a high price – often four or five times that of normal honey.

In the Himalayas, local tribes, such as the Gurung of Nepal, traditionally harvest the honey. In these mountains, above altitudes of 2500 m, Himalayan cliff bees build enormous nests on the overhanging rocks of Southwestern facing cliffs. These huge nests, up to 5 ft. in diameter are extraordinarily difficult to reach, but accessing the bees' hives that can contain 60 kg of honey, is so valuable that highly committed hunters annually risk their lives.

If you choose to view the documentary, you will appreciate that the pursuit of rhododendron flowers is truly a passionate one.



Azalea 'Golden Comet'

Deciduous azalea

Height: 5 ft.

'Golden comet' is a clone/selection/
cultivated form of wild species: *R. luteum*

Selected by: Crown Estate Commissioners,
England, 1994

R. 'Genghis Khan'

Elepidote Height: 5 ft

Hybridiser: Brandt, 1996

('Britannia' x 'Felis Group')

2015-16 Coming Events

March 2, 2016

CVRS Monthly Meeting
7:30 pm
Doug Justice UBC
Biodiversity in the Garden

March 12, 2016

Cobble Hill Seedy Saturday
10 am to 3 pm
Cobble Hill Hall

April 6, 2016

CVRS Monthly Meeting –Ian Efford
The Public Rhododendron Gardens of
Vancouver Island

April 8 & 9, 2016

Vancouver Island Rock and Alpine Garden Society's
2016 Annual Spring Show and Sale
Cadboro Bay United Church
2625 Arbutus Road Victoria, BC

April 18-20, 2016

Skagit Valley Tulip Festival
Chemainus Tours Contact: Jim Bangle

April 30, 2016

Cowichan Valley Garden Fair Cowichan Exhibition
10 am – 2 pm
www.CowichanValleyGardenFair.com
Please donate plants for the CVRS plant table

May 1, 2016

Nanaimo Rhodo Club Plant Sale
Beban Park Nanaimo

May 4, 2016

CVRS Monthly Meeting St. John's Church,
Duncan - 163 First St. 7:30 pm
Gordon Murray - Trilliums in the Garden
www.cowichanrhodos.ca

May 14-15, 2016

Nanaimo Rhodo Society Public Garden Tour
<http://nanaimorhodos.ca>

May 28, 2016

CVGC Annual Flower Show and Tea St. Peter's
Church Hall 10 am
www.cowichanvalleygardenclub.com

June 11, 2016

Community Flower and Garden Show
Cobble Hill Hall – 9 am to 2 pm
www.MillBayGardenClub.com

June 18, 2016

CVRS Summer Picnic and Awards/Wrap Up
11:30 am to 2:30 pm

September 30- Oct. 2, 2016

ARS Western Regional Conference
Newport, Oregon



Azalea 'Giant Fireglow'

Deciduous azalea

Hybridizer: Hobbie, Dietrich G. (1973)

Skagit Valley Tulip Festival

April 18 - 20, 2016

Spring is the season when the tulips bloom and the Skagit Valley is alive with local activities and events. Join us as we celebrate this "must see" annual Tulip Festival



Trip includes:

Return bus transportation To Skagit Valley for 3 days, 2 ferry crossings , a visit to historic town of La Conner, 2 nights hotel accommodation and taxes at the Tulalip Casino, Resort Hotel plus breakfast daily at Eagles buffet, seafood buffet, gaming voucher and baggage handling, Seattle Premium Outlets (www.premiumoutlets.com) are within walking distance of our hotel, Tour of RoozenGaarde and Tulip Town tulip farms, Kiwanis Salmon Barbeque, Admission to Hibulb Cultural Center and Natural History Preserve

Chemainus Tours Contact: Jim Bangle Phone: 250-246-5055 Cell: 250-252-0888 BC Reg. # 55371



R. 'Gilbert Myer'

Elepidote Mid-season Height: 5 ft.

Hybridiser: Myers 1986

('Blue Peter' x ?)

R. 'Gordian'

Elepidote Mid-season

Height: 3 ft.

Hybridiser: Hachmann, 1990

Unknown parentage

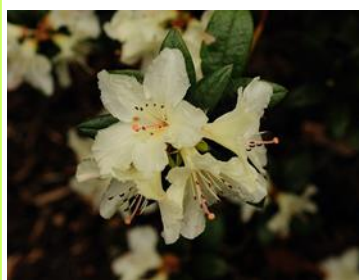


CVRS Rhodos Available Spring 2016

In anticipation of the continued shortage of growers and rhodos in 2016 the CVRS organised the advance purchase of 350 1 gallon rhodos from Erica Enterprises nurseries in Pitt Meadows last fall. These will be shipped to arrive for the Cowichan Valley Garden Fair on April 30. Ian Efford did the work on arranging these plants which were purchased, like most CVRS spending over the past five years, with proceeds from past garden tours. The plants will be sold to the public at the Garden Fair.

These plants will be available to CVRS members at an Early Bird Sale. Further information regarding the details of this purchase opportunity will be distributed at later date. The following is the list of hybrids and species ordered. The quantity of plants ordered is shown as the number in front of the hybrid name.

10 RHODO BLUE OX	5 RHODO GARTENDIREKTOR GLOCKER	5 RHODO NANCY EVANS
10 RHODO BRUCE BRIGG'S	5 RHODO GOLDEN GATE	5 RHODO PACHYSANTHUM
10 RHODO BUSUKI	5 RHODO GOLDSTRIKE	5 RHODO PEMA KOENSE
5 RHODO CAMPYLOGYNUM	5 RHODO HACHMANN'S POLARIS	5 RHODO PINK PORCELAIN
5 RHODO CAMPYLOGYNUM DWARF	5 RHODO HALLELUJAH	10 RHODO POLARNACHT
5 RHODO CARMEN	10 RHODO HONEYBUTTER	5 RHODO PURPLE GEM
5 RHODO CARMEN X KEN JANECK	5 RHODO HOTEL	5 RHODO PURPLE PASSION
10 RHODO CHECKMATE	5 RHODO IMPEDITUM	5 RHODO RABATZ
10 RHODO CHERRIES & MERLOT	10 RHODO KARIN SELEGER	5 RHODO RAMAPO
5 RHODO CILPINENSE	5 RHODO KELETICUM	5 RHODO ROYSTON RED
5 RHODO CONROY	5 RHODO KEN JANECK	5 RHODO SAFFRANO
5 RHODO CREAM CREST	10 RHODO KODIAK	5 RHODO SHAMROCK
5 RHODO ELIZABETH HOBBIE	5 RHODO LORI EICHELSER	5 RHODO SNOWLADY
5 RHODO ELIZABETH OSTBO RED	5 RHODO MILKY WAY	10 RHODO SUGAR PUFF
	5 RHODO MILTON	10 RHODO TEACHERS PET
	5 RHODO MOERHEIM	5 RHODO TITAN BEAUTY
		10 RHODO WILD GINGER



Cream Crest



Kodiak



Polarnacht



Wild Ginger

VIRAGS Annual Spring Show and Sale

April 8 & 9

The Vancouver Island Rock and Alpine Garden Society's 2016 Annual Spring Show and Sale will be held at:

Cadboro Bay United Church,
2625 Arbutus Road, Victoria, BC

Friday, April 8 1 pm to 8 pm

Saturday, April 9 9 – 3 pm

Plant sale by members

11 am Saturday



This is a well-established juried show, featuring wonderful rock and alpine garden plants. As well as show entries, there will be commercial and member plant sales, seed sales, displays, door prizes, and refreshments. Admission is by donation.



goodenoughii

Subgenus Rhododendrons

Section Vireya

Subsection Euvireya

Hardiness: Tropical

In cultivation since: 1964

First described: 1960, (Sleumer)

Euvireya characteristics: Scales sessile or stalked, scattered or dense, not of two obviously different size classes, lobed to deeply incised (or sometimes entire) and the centre not dark-coloured. (Craven 2008)

Numbering in over 300 species, vireyas can be found growing across much of S.E. Asia, principally in New Guinea, Borneo, Sulawesi, Sumatra and the Philippines. Although these are tropical regions, vireyas mostly grow in the cool mountainous areas, either as epiphytes high in the tall trees of the cloud forest, or in more open ground in shrubberies. Here the climate is more temperate and this makes the vireya ideal for wider cultivation across many parts of the world.

Anne Slaby of Cherry Point Rhododendrons

Member Profile

"Babylon. It's white and has such a lovely truss. One of the early hybrids; 1955 I think." Anne Slaby, her eyes enthusiastic and smiling, does not hesitate, even for a second, before naming and describing the rhododendron that she looked forward to seeing eagerly each spring. But no, this was not one of the plants she was able to take with her when she moved to her new home in Arbutus Ridge several months ago. "The plant was too big, you see. But I did take some small rhododendrons with me. Some that are rather interesting perhaps, but it was so hard to choose. I have such a little yard now." She points to the twenty rhododendrons in pots that she plans will surround her private patio, as soon as the weather permits the planting. A fluffy grey ornament hanging from her eaves bounces madly about. A squirrel has wrapped itself around a suet feeder, pulling special treats through the wires. Her backyard is a haven for well-fed birds and squirrels.

Adventurously, Anne had left England for Canada by sailing to Montreal, and having assessed that Toronto's climate was too cold, travelled by train to Vancouver. Although a nurse trained at the highly reputable Children's Hospital for Sick Children, Great Osmond Street, she required additional obstetrics training before she could work in Canadian Hospitals.

She met Roger at one of Vancouver's "displaced persons" Pillows and Candles parties. "Or maybe it was cushions," she chuckles. After a short courtship they flew to England to marry and then immediately flew back so that Roger could pursue a Master's degree in History at Washington State University. Roger had previously earned a degree in Science and Horticulture. After their two children arrived they decided Canada would be a more suitable



place to settle and moved to Squamish, where Roger earned employment teaching at a private school, which, over time, became the Easter Seals Camp. Anne worked on a part-time basis as an Ambulance attendant administering care to patients in route to the Lion's Gate Hospital. She recounts a memory of having bagged a newborn infant all the way to the Lion's Gate Hospital from Squamish. On their arrival the doctor noticed her GOS badge and remarked, "No wonder it lived."

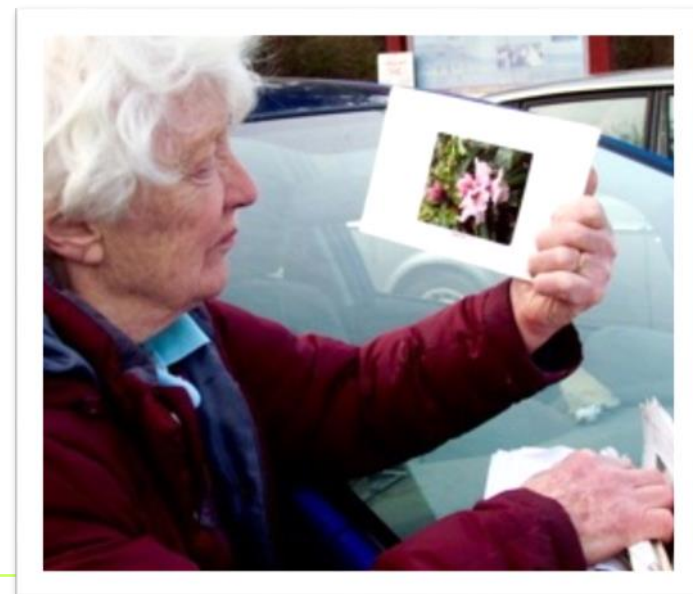
Roger's rhododendron propagating passions began in Squamish where he built his first propagator in their basement. Between teaching assignments, Roger worked at a nursery and came to know Les Clay. This quite likely sparked his interest in rhododendrons. Because Roger's parents lived in Oregon, they travelled regularly through the areas where they could visit Whitney's Nursery, and the Van Veen's. When Roger's began working with the Ministry of Environment in Victoria, Anne remained in Squamish to avoid disrupting their children's education. On her weekend trips to Vancouver Island they viewed 83 properties before finding the four



acres on Cherry Point Road. Fifty-three rhododendrons moved to the acreage before the family did.

Anne wasn't certain how many stock rhododendrons she and Roger collected and planted in the woodland gardens of their Cherry Point Rhododendrons property. Roger was the horticulturist---the propagator; Anne was the enthusiastic salesperson who could quickly lead customers to specific rhododendrons, and readily state their favourable features and their specific growing requirements.

Today, she kneels down and lifts the lid of her "blanket-box-turned-records-box", revealing generous copies of Briggs Rhododendron catalogues, Downs Nursery plant lists, and Magnolia growers catalogues. After shuffling items, she squeezes out two,



oversized file-card boxes, jammed to overflowing. "Here you are! These are the names and information about all the rhododendrons. All in alphabetical order. Take a look at them and you can learn a lot from them. Roger recorded everything. About five hundred, perhaps?"

She admits the changes in her life over the last several years have presented challenges, and at times, it seemed, overwhelming ones. When Roger became ill, she had 1400 propagated rhododendrons to sell in between her daily visits to the hospital. "Oh well, you know; you can't stop," she insists. "You just have to keep going. Family and friends help so much, of course."

The strength and feistiness that Anne exudes does not appear to be diminishing. "Well yes, it is different. What I don't miss is all the watering---and especially the worry." She gazes out the window at the downpour, and then at her two aging dogs wobbling in expectation. "We keep busy, you know. We pile into the car and go to Cherry Point Beach for a walk twice a day. Rain or shine. Sometimes I even have a friend's two dogs to look after as well. It's no trouble! They're like part of the family by now. Yes, Yogi and Shadow, that's where we are going right now!"

The weathered sign may now be tucked in Anne's garage, but the Cherry Point Rhododendrons continue to flower, both where they were planted by Anne and Roger in their gardens, and in many of other gardens on Vancouver Island.

Author's Note: The blooms of Anne and Roger's Cherry Point Rhododendron property were visible across the hay field from my home on Cherry Point Road. Some of their outstanding rhododendrons, 'Sir Charles Lemon', 'Loderi King George', and 'Polar Bear' were among the first rhodos to find homes in my garden, and some moved with us to our current home. Thank-you, Anne and Roger for such an introduction to rhododendrons! I am wondering how difficult it will be to find R. 'Babylon' for Anne's new garden. And perhaps a Rhodo Planting Bee would be fun!
- Verna Buhler



R. 'Glowing Gold'

Elepidote Early Mid-season

Height: 3 ft. H5

Hybridiser: Fujioka, 1981

(Yaku Sunrise x Lem's Cameo)

R. 'Gentle Giant'

Elepidote Mid-season

Height: 7 ft. H5

Hybridiser: Sanders, 1992

(Point Defiance x Platinum Pearl)



R. 'Glenna'

Elepidote Mid-season

Height: 5 ft. H4

Hybridiser: Barlup, 1985

('Hotei' x 'One Thousand Butterflies')

NOTE from the EDITOR

Thank you for this opportunity to assume the role of editor of your newsletter. Bill Dumont and past editors have set high standards; I have heard nothing but appreciation for the quality of the CVRS Newsletter.



Rhododendron groenlandicum

(formerly *Ledum groenlandicum*)
Labrador tea/bog Labrador tea.

This species can be found in boggy areas of the Cowichan Valley.

Although I have been a member of The Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society for a relatively short time, I have felt welcome from the evening of my very first visit. More than once, I have been caught bragging about the many generous individuals who make this club so special. You so willingly share time, knowledge, plants, cuttings, support, enthusiasm, and humour, to name just a few.

Many thanks for all the words of wisdom, quotations, information, articles, and suggestions for this month's newsletter. Your willingness to contribute to newsletter production is another quality the Cowichan Valley Chapter members should brag about.



Hopefully, there will be a photo, a story, an article, a notice, a reminder, even a small tidbit of information to interest each one of you in this issue. Please continue to offer ideas, suggestions, articles and feedback, as these constitute the basis of a true newsletter. The option, heaven forbid, would to see what I think is interesting.

Having said that, searching for "G" rhododendron species led me to *R. groenlandicum*, which prompted me to make a visit, this week, to my favourite stand

of Labrador tea just kilometers from our home. Last fall, when I trekked across a fallen log to reach the site, I was concerned to see that I would have to return with my chest waders to wander about where, regularly, my hiking boots were adequate. The area was flooded even after the hot dry summer. Drainage patterns into, or out of, the area had obviously changed since the spring of that year.

This week, the water level was about six to eight inches higher than it was in September, and the leaves of the *R. groenlandicum* further from the edge the lake, where the photo taken three years earlier, appeared brown and weak. Although *R. groenlandicum* is not an endangered species, this experience personalized the reluctance, shared by so many on a much broader landscape, to accept that development and progress may cause those privately treasured areas, in this case "my secret garden" of *R. groenlandicum* to suffer, and, perhaps soon, to succumb and disappear.



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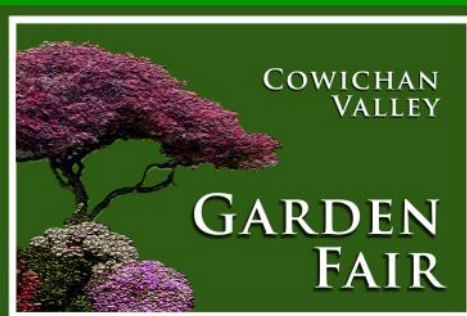
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