

The

Rhodoholic



Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society

Volume 26:4 May 2015

President's Message

A number of the rhododendrons and azaleas in my garden are blooming about three weeks to a month earlier than usual. I have managed to find a few bare spaces amongst them and have my wish list in hand. I look forward to crossing off a number of plants at the fast approaching Garden Fair this Saturday.

The timing seems to be perfect to outdo last year's spectacular truss show. Bring your trusses to Cow Ex for the Garden Fair display Friday or early Saturday morning. You will have bragging rights for a whole year if you win the People's Choice Award. Marc Colombel, an international speaker will introduce us to Rhododendrons in



Tuesday, May 5, 2015

CVRS Monthly Meeting Marc Columbel, from France, Rhodo Expert

St. John's Church @ 7:30 pm See page 3 for more details

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France: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow at the general meeting Tuesday May 5. We are planning on having a full house as we have invited members from all Chapters in District 1 as well as the Cowichan Valley Garden Club.

We are very excited to announce," The Public Rhododendron Gardens of Vancouver Island Guide", by lan Efford, will be hot off of the press and available for sale in the coming weeks (see page 15). We plan to have copies available for sale at the Garden Fair and the May general meeting.

The 70th Anniversary ARS International Convention

is next week. We look forward to four days of hearing global experts on Rhododendrons, seeing exceptional parks and gardens, an opportunity to purchase rhododendrons and companion plants, meet with old friends and cultivate new friendships all while enjoying the scenic surroundings of Sidney-by-the-Sea. It will be great to see everyone there.

Bon voyage to our members travelling to UK mid-May on our Garden Tour of Cornwall and Devon. We look forward to your photos and hearing all your stories..

Sandra Stevenson



World Class Rhododendron Speaker at This Month's CVRS Meeting

Marc Columbel, a renowned rhodoholic from Brittany in France and member of the ARS since 1980 will speak next Tuesday, May 5 at 7:30 pm on *Rhododendrons in France,* Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow.



Marc has had a distinguished career in the rhodo world as a hybridizer and intense promoter of rhodos. His first hybridization was in 1985 with his first registration in 1992. By the end of 2013 Marc had created a remarkable 900 new hybrids of our favourite species. As well Marc created in 1996 the website www.rhododendron.fr which has more than 300 dedicated followers and is a wealth of information about hybridization and his many hybrids.

Marc's website explains the origin of rhodos. Rhododendron comes from the Greek: rhodos, "rose" and dendron, "tree". It was the naturalist Carl von Linné who gave the genus its name. Today the genus RHODODENDRON groups together about 1000 species and the number of hybrids of rhododendrons is estimated at more than 25,500.

As well as hybridizing Marc has published more than 200 articles about rhodos and produced a book on rhodos. He started the first truss show in France and a society promoting this species. He is an amazing, dedicated advocate who has made huge strides in promoting rhododendrons. Marc will also speak on propagation at the ARS convention in Sidney on Thursday May 7 at 9:30 am.

Note our May meeting is next TUESDAY at 7:30 pm - Bring a Friend!



Queen Elizabeth II



Queen of Sheba

Media Release

April 27, 2015



WELCOME SATURDAY 10 AM TO 2 PM

THOUSANDS OF RHODOS, PLANTS AND GARDEN ITEMS www.CowichanValleyGardenFair.com



Saturday's Garden Fair Ready for Big Crowds

The Cowichan Rhodo Society has been holding spring plant sales for more than 20 years and five years ago created the Cowichan Valley Garden Fair at the Cowichan Exhibition on the first weekend in May. Each year the 4 hour fair has expanded and more than 20 vendors, growers and plant sellers will offer thousands of rhododendrons, other plants and garden supplies to the public this coming Saturday May 2.

Sandra Stevenson, the Rhodo society President said "Everybody in the Cowichan Valley knows that early birds get the best and choice plants at this don't miss event. We open at 10 am sharp and we are ready for the big crowds. Come early and enjoy our free coffee and goodies as well as free entry.

Due to an apparent shortage of rhodos this year we have obtained a supply from US nurseries in Washington and Oregon to supplement the plants available from local growers. So we have a very broad selection of exceptional colours and sizes of rhodos and companion plants this year along with 25 new carts to help buyers move their favourite plants to the checkout. Our ever popular truss (flower) displays of local rhodos will be showcased as you enter the Cowex hall."

There are more than 1000 species of rhododendrons found in nature worldwide, mostly from the Himalayas, India, China and the tropics

but they also occur locally near Shawnigan Lake and Nanaimo. From these species, over the past two centuries breeders have created more than 25,500 hybrids with every flower colour of the rainbow, many leaf styles, sizes and underleaf colours.



"This year our community donations will go to the BC Forest Discovery Centre, the Snipe Fountain in Chemainus and the Crofton Museum" said Sandra. "Rhododendrons also make an excellent Mother's Day gift as, unlike cut flowers, they can last for 50 years or more in the garden and be a continuous reminder of her child's generosity and love". Because of their dramatic flowers and beauty rhododendrons have been prized in gardens for centuries. In fact in the past rhodos were considered so valuable and taken as war booty by the winners to their own territories.

Contact: Bill Dumont 250 743 9882

CVRS Rhodos for Sale

The CVRS has assembled several hundred rhodos for sale at the Garden Fair this weekend. These plants come from a number of different nurseries and sources and are available for sale to Club Members just before the fair opens on Saturday morning.

The following is a complete list of available rhodos in widely varying sizes, most of which are hybrids but a few species are included as well:

Firerim / Sapporo /Bubble Gum/ Azurro / Karen Seleger /Wine and Roses/ Wild ginger/ Everred/ Cherries and Merlot/ Proteoides/ Snowbird/ Ribbon Candy/ Maraschino / Fairy Pillow/ Arneson's Gem /Pink and Sweet /Anah Kruschke/Purpureum elegans/Janet Blair/ Lee's Dark Purple/Unique/Gomer Waterer/Nova Zembla/Rex/Rimini/Catawbiense grandiflorum/Golden Gate/Viscy/English Roseum/Crete/Chinoides/Ponticum variegatum/ Cunningham's Blush/Anna Rose Whitney/Calsap/Percy Wiseman/Minnetonka/President Lincoln/Jean Marie de Montague/Besse Howells

www.CowichanValleyGardenFair.com





www.facebook.com/CowichanValleyGardenFair

Help Wanted for Garden Fair

Table Setup from 1 to 4 pm this Friday at the Cowichan Exhibition and help needed from 8am to 3 pm on Saturday. Thanks!!



Quinte II



CVRS Trip to the Olympic Peninsular and Juan De Fuca Chapter of the ARS

Eighteen rhododendron enthusiasts embarked on the Coho Ferry from the Victoria Harbour on Thursday April 16, having departed from the beautiful Cowichan Valley and other Island homes at sunrise to ensure an uninterrupted commute across the Malahat.

Once aboard the ferry, the second of numerous surprises on the trip, brought expressions of gratitude and amazement when travellers opened their specially catered buffet bag lunches. The caterer was Bill Dumont himself, our generous tour organizer and guide! The first surprise had been the wonderful sunshine that had participants discussing the possibility of having over-packed in preparation for cooler, wetter weather. Participants began to discover both shared interests and the diversity of knowledge, and friendship began to "bud and blossom".

After what seemed a short crossing, and our luggage had been deposited at the Red Lion, obviously the favoured hotel in Port Angeles with its expanse along the waterfront, we were introduced to Willy Nelson sporting his western attire, a leather cowboy hat and grey beard. He was our bus driver and guide, did not respond to our requests for familiar tunes, but promptly dropped us off at the library for the joint meeting with the Juan de Fuca Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society.

It was such a pleasure to meet with the members of the Juan de Fuca Chapter of rhododendron enthusiasts. This group of approximately twenty-five

Thanks to all the great photographers who provided their excellent images for this article - Sharon Tillie, Verna Buhler, Garth Wedemire, Sandra Stevenson and Bill Dumont.



to thirty members has so much to share that it is sure to grow exponentially. If those who were not in attendance that afternoon are only half as genuinely warm and welcoming as those we met, then this is the club in Port Angeles to join, as rhododendron lovers or not! Our hosts had arranged for guest speakers, Sue Milliken and Kelly Dobson of Far Reaches Farm Nursery, to present photos and descriptions of their most recent plant collectors' trip





to the Himalayas. Following the fascinating presentation, we were invited to socialize amidst plentiful home-prepared goodies. Those who were busy purchasing unique plants from Far Reaches Farm Nursery, realized later that they had somehow missed out on a delicious crockpot gingerbread cake. It was agreed that this must only be the first of more shared activities in the future.

Shortly thereafter, Willy whisked us off to Hurricane Ridge, a spectacular drive up more than 5000 feet during which Willy gave us a lively commentary of the Olympic Peninsula. Willy made a stop at a viewpoint halfway up the mountain with breathtaking vistas of Mt. Baker and the Olympic Range and forests. Hurricane Ridge, when we arrived, proved even more magnificent than anticipated and cameras were busy.



Bill ensured we were on the bus, then pulled another surprise, a draw for "swag", special clothing and bags, which several fortunate winners proudly modelled during the remainder of the trip. We were back in Port Angeles in ideal time for a specially arranged dinner of salmon or pork, accompanied by wine and cheesecake at Michael's Steak House. Sufficiently relaxed after the food, wine, and pleasant conversation an early bedtime in preparation for a sunrise wake up call the next morning seemed appropriate for most.

The next morning, individuals arrived for breakfast at the hotel restaurant, The Crab House, set overlooking the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Some arrived



early enough to witness the sun rising from the ocean, while others shuffled in just in time to watch the huge ocean-going oil drilling platform arriving on a massive carrier from Malaysia, led by an ocean tug, and supported by a Coast Guard helicopter. It explained the polite young men with deep, southeastern accents hovering outside of the hotel lobby the evening before.

When we boarded the bus at 7:30 am, we anticipated, and were not disappointed, when Willy continued his detailed historical commentary on the Olympic Peninsula.

Whitney Gardens has the ability to literally "take one's breath away". Here an intense hour included touring awe-inspiring gardens of rhododendron. As



the nursery was developed in 1955, some of the rhododendrons could reasonably be more than 50 years old and towered forty to fifty feet in height. Again attempts were made to capture the images with cameras, as futile as it seemed, and then began the difficult and hurried decisions to purchase rhododendron treasures for special shipment. These decisions may have qualified as the most stressful moments for the participants on the tour. Once again, Bill provided the organizational structure for these purchases and all the rhodos were delivered to their owners by April 29.

Once the new owners of fine rhododendrons were whisked away onto the bus they chattered about their findings. The entertaining narrative by Willy Nelson continued as the route to Far Reaches Farm Nursery led through the quaint Victorian town of Port Townsend. Sue Millikan of Far Reaches Nursery greeted her eager guests and led a comprehensive guided tour of the shade house, which featured rare and unusual shade plants collected in various parts of the world. No purchases could be made at this time, as a wallets and purses where not allowed off the bus. Cameras were busy. In the shade house, absolutely perfect specimens of unusual plants initially silenced viewers in awe, and then Sue patiently offered responses to a peppering of questions. How magical it was to gaze at plants, which resulted from the dedicated efforts of Sue and Kelly on the Himalayas collection trip that we had just



seen presented the day before.

Then, on the road again under blue skies, we returned to Port Angeles where we had a brief hour to shop, to find special lunch spots, and to shoot more photos. Participants chose to engage in as



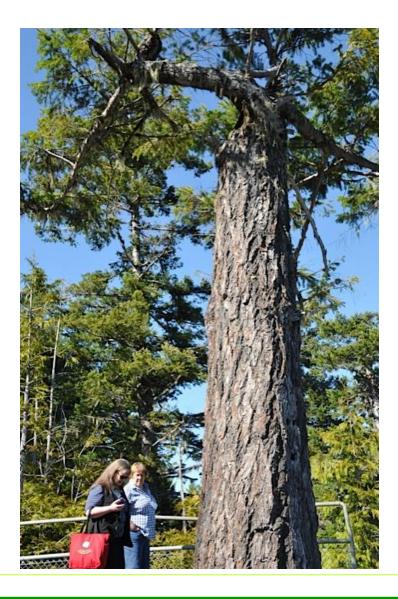
many of those options as possible, while Bill, in what participants discovered was his typically generous fashion, sat amongst the luggage in the ferry terminal, guarding it until we all returned.

The return crossing, at times smooth and at times not, under hazy skies offered the last hours for a multitude of conversations to further develop new acquaintances and newly formed friendships to continue. Passing near any groups so engaged, an accidental eavesdropper would certainly hear commonly held reflections: the trip had been most thoughtfully planned, organized, and managed;

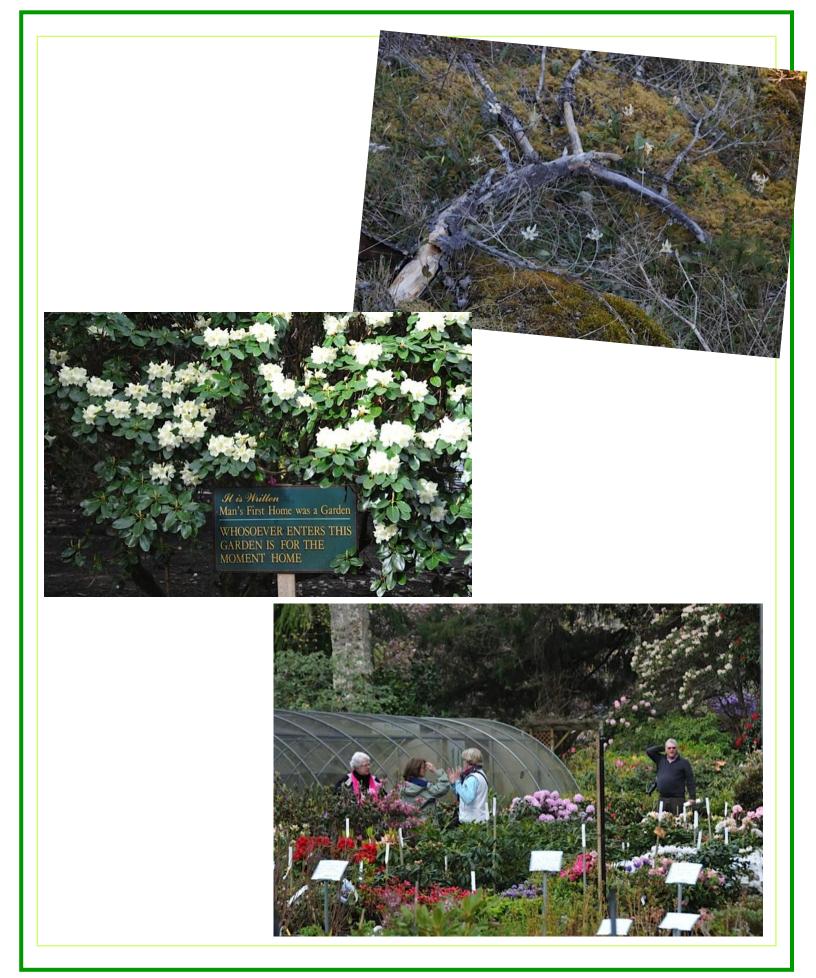
throughout the entire trip, participants were continually inspired by what they were seeing and learning; the experience of shared passions was intense and uplifting. Always, however, the comments reverted back to the host of the tour, Bill, and his attention to detail and the many creative surprises he had generously included.

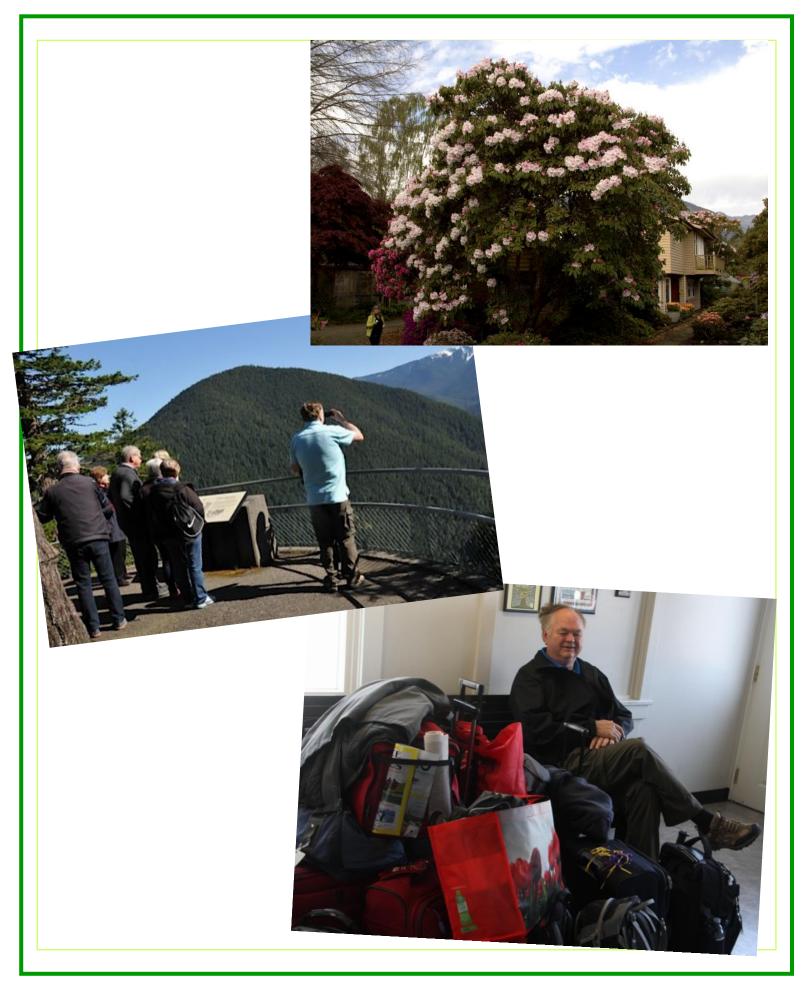
Reporting Team – Sue Wedemire, Marie Jacques, Rhonda Rose, Sandra Stevenson, Verna Buhler











R. lindleyi and R. edgworthii

In rhododendron discussions, there is often talk of a plant that flowered for the first time after 15 or 25 years. In many cases, these are rhododendrons with very large flowers and often ones that are very scented. Many are tender species in the Maddenia group or hybrids from these species. Depending on your age, you may not live long enough to enjoy the blooms! There are some alternatives that flower from cuttings at a relatively young age and have large and sometimes scented flowers. I grow two.

At the moment, I have a plant of R. lindleyi with very large white flowers which is about a metre high after growing nearly a third of a metre during the last year. It has been kept in the greenhouse over winter although the books state that it has a hardiness of 1-2, meaning that it should survive our winters outdoors with no trouble if it grown out of the direct influence of wind. The natural habitat is up to 3,300 m in the Himalayan countries of Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, Assam and southern Tibet.

Over winter it developed a number of very large buds of which one died and the others produced trusses of a few large flowers. As far as I can tell,



these are not scented although, with age my sense of smell is disappearing.

The species is noted for being straggly and mine certainly grows fast. In fact, I cut off most of the tall stems in the autumn as I wanted it to be more branched and it was on the way to filling the greenhouse. I started cuttings from this material but only one seems likely to root.

An alternative is the scented, R. edgeworthii, classified with two other species in the Edgeworthia subsection. This, too, is easy to grow and last year mine produced many flowers. This year there are none but the plant seems healthy and is sending up plenty of new shoots. These flowers might be preferred by some since, unlike the stark white of the R. lindleyi, they have a slight tint of rose on the back of the flower. The leaves and stems are attractive as they are covered in a dense, pale rust-coloured "wool".

This species too has been kept in the greenhouse over winter although, in this case, the hardiness of 2 -3 suggests that it should survive here in a protected area without any trouble. It certainly does in Lions Bay where I have seen a large plant growing on a tree stump.

In this case also, I cut back the excess growth and there is some chance that a few of the ten or so cuttings will root.

Both species are available from some of the more specialized nurseries and it is probable that they will be available at the ARS Convention in May.

So, you do not have to wait 25 years to see very large flowers on your rhododendrons, all you have to do is to choose your plants carefully!

Ian E. Efford

Open Gardens

It's that time again for open gardens when CVRS members and friends can visit the home gardens of some of the best gardeners in the Cowichan Valley. This year we are doing the open garden program in conjunction with the Cowichan Valley Garden Club and the Mill Bay Garden Club.

Thursday April 30:

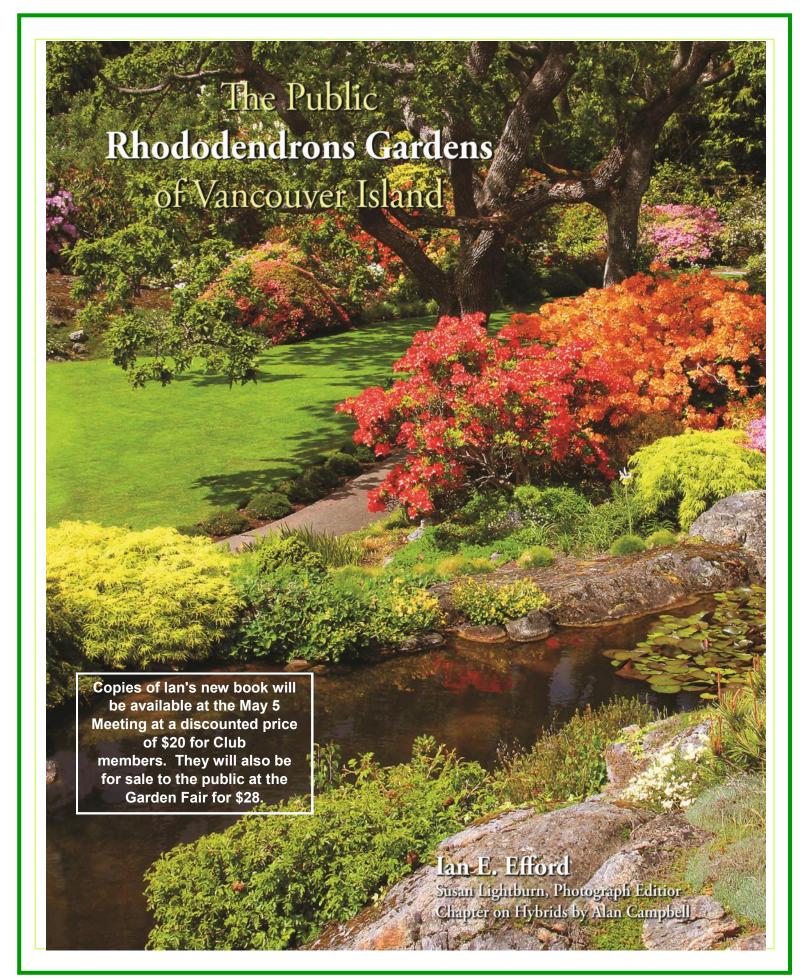
• Don Loewen and Louise Neveu - 6:30 pm on - 6324 Genoa Bay Road (Maple Bay)

Friday May 8:

- Al and Sandy Campbell all day 1995 Shawnigan Lake Road
- Peter Lewis- 1 pm to 3 pm 2580 Riverfield Road, near Bright Angel Park-parking only on Riverfield Road.

If you can welcome people to your garden please let Sandra Stevenson (250 748 5570).





Trelissick—Tranquil with a superb collection of tender and exotic plants

The CVRS UK Tour will be visiting this very special National Trust garden in mid-May and arrive there by ferry from Truro.



On its own peninsula with ever-changing views of the estuary of the River Fal near Falmouth, Trelissick has one of the most amazing natural settings in the country. There are more than 12 hectares (30 acres) of elevated garden to explore, with twisting paths that lead you through significant collections of hydrangeas, rhododendrons, camellias, ginger lilies and year-round exciting woodland plants.

As well as the garden, the 121-hectare (300-acre) estate, with its countryside, woodlands and coast, makes for breathtaking walks.

Trelissick has its own renowned art gallery with a wide range of work from local Cornish artists. Trelissick also has a gift shop, second-hand bookshop and six of the best National Trust holiday cottages located around the Trelissick estate.

April and May are the most dramatic time of year in the garden as Rhododendrons, azaleas, camellias and flowering cherries all burst into life above a carpet of daffodils and native wild flowers to magnificent effect,



aided in part by the mild maritime climate afforded by the river Fal, which flanks the garden on three sides. There are 7 acres of arboretum and an orchard containing over 70 varieties of local Cornish apples.

Trelissick has a rich history and appears to have existed as a farm by the late 13th century. In 1705 this was occupied by the Lawrence family, who had probably been established there since the mid or late 17th century. Soon after inheriting, John Lawrence built a mansion at Trelissick to the design of Edmund Davey and laid out a small park. When Lawrence died in 1790, the estate was divided, the larger portion being held by his widow. The Lawrence

family experienced financial difficulties after 1790, and in 1805 Trelissick was offered for sale as the result of legal action by the family's creditors, including Ralph Allen Daniell.

Daniell, who now acquired Trelissick, was the son of a wealthy tin and copper mine owner, expanded and developed the 18th century park, creating rides through woodland to the north and south of the house; these developments are shown on an estate plan of about 1821.

When Daniell died in 1823 the estate passed to his son Thomas, who in 1825 commissioned the architect P F Robinson to enlarge and remodel the existing house. Robinson's design was published as an example of a 'Residence in the Grecian Style' in his Designs for Ornamental Villas (1827). In the same year it was noted that 'the plantations and shrubberies round the mansion are extremely beautiful, especially the latter, which abound with many varieties of choice shrubs' (Ackerman 1827).

Agricultural and mining depressions in the early 19th century left Thomas Daniell's fortune depleted, and in 1831 he was declared bankrupt. Trelissick came into the hands of Viscount Falmouth of Tregothnan who held a mortgage over it; the house remained unoccupied from 1832 to 1844, and Lord Falmouth tried, unsuccessfully, to sell the property in 1837 and 1839. Finally, in 1844, he sold it to John Davies Gilbert (1811-1854).

Gilbert restored the neglected house and pleasure grounds, but at his death in 1854 his son and heir, Carew Davies Gilbert, was still a minor. After coming of age, Carew Gilbert commissioned Piers St Aubyn to make additions to the house, and developed an extensive collection of conifers and other plants in the pleasure grounds; many of these were derived from his extensive foreign travels in the late 19th century.

When Carew Davies died in 1913 the estate was divided, and the house and gardens were let to Leonard Cunliffe, a former Governor of the Bank of England. Cunliffe purchased the freehold interest in 1928, and at his death in 1937 this passed to his step daughter, Mrs. Ida Copeland and her husband. Until 1948 Mr. and Mrs. Copeland lived in Staffordshire where Mr. Copeland was managing director of the china company W T Copeland and Sons Ltd; many of the flowers painted on their Spode china were grown at Trelissick.

In 1955 Mrs. Copeland gave 376 acres (about 156 hectares) of garden, park, and woodland to the National Trust while the mansion remained the family home and passed to Mrs. Copeland's son at her death in 1964. The National Trust has continued the development of the gardens in the second half of the 20th century.



Coming Events-2015

May 2, 2015

Cowichan Valley Garden Fair

Cowichan Exhibition 10 am – 2 pm www.CowichanValleyGardenFair.com

Please donate plants for the CVRS plant table

May 4, 2015

Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society Monthly Meeting

Qualicum Beach Civic Centre – 7:30 pm Special Guest Speakers – Ken Cox and Dr. Hartwig Schepker A trip from Hell –Plant Hunting expedition to Arunachal Pradesh www.mars.rhodos.ca

May 5, 2015 - **TUESDAY**

CVRS Monthly Meeting – Marc Columbel –from France – Rhodo Expert

St. John's Church, Duncan- 163 First St. 7:30 pm www.cowichan.rhodos.ca

May 6-10, 2015

ARS Convention

Mary Winspear Centre, Sydney www.2015rhodo.ca

May 14-25, 2015

CVRS SW Great Britain Garden Tour

www.cowichanrhodos.com

June 14, 2015

Community Flower and Garden Show

Cobble Hill Hall – 9 am to 2 pm www.MillBayGardenClub.com

June 20, 2015

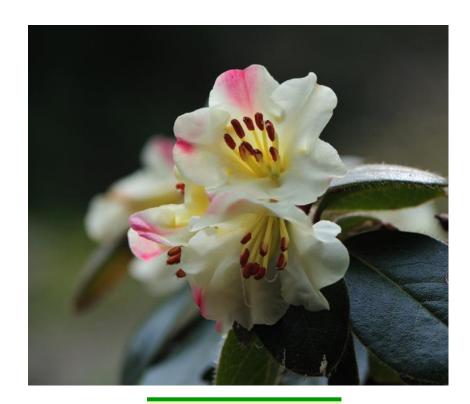
CVRS Summer Picnic and Awards/Wrap Up

Efford's Estate – 2307 Locksyde Drive, Duncan 11:30 am to 2:30 pm

Plants and Raffle Items Wanted

The CVRS has a club plant table at the Garden Fair and we are asking members to bring at least 10 plants for sale at the table. We also hold a raffle each year and welcome donated items such as books, plants and other garden or rhododendron related items for the raffle.

Thanks for your help!!



Quaver

2014-2015 Executive

- President: Sandra Stevenson (<u>pinchofherbs@shaw.ca</u> 250-748-5570)
- Past President: Ian Efford (efford@shaw.ca 250-597-4470)
- Secretary: Verna Buhler (<u>Vlbuhler@shaw.ca</u> 250-748-8889)
- Treasurer: Bill Dumont (wedumont@hotmail.com 250-743-9882)
- Membership: Marie Jacques (<u>randamjax@shaw.ca</u> 250-743-5021)
- Newsletter Editor: Bill Dumont
- Directors at Large:
 Joe Hudak, Elaine Kitchen,
 Siggi Kemmler,
 Alan Campbell

Convenors

Sunshine: Mary Gale

Tea: The Team

· Raffle: Hilda Gerrits

- Club Liaison: Alan Campbell
- · Library: Joyce Rodger
- Program Co-ordinator: Alan Campbell, Sandra Stevenson
- · History: Ian Efford
- Garden Tours: Alan Murray
- · CV Garden Fair: The Team
- Facility Liaison: Roy Elvins
- Christmas Party: The Team
- Bus Tour: Bill Dumont
- Species Garden Reps: Siggi Kemmler, Alan Campbell



Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society

A Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society P.O. Box 904 Duncan, British Columbia V9L 3Y3

http://cowichan.rhodos.ca



www.cowichanvalleygardenfair.com Saturday May 2, 2015

Newsletter design/format & website edits by Mary-Lynn Boxem (mboxem@shaw.ca)

Volunteers Needed

May is always the busiest time for the CVRS with our Garden Fair and bus trip and this year we have the ARS convention in Sidney-a not to be missed event. We can always use lots of volunteer support at our Garden Fair either the day before setting up or helping to run the fair on Saturday. We usually get more than 1000 people at this important fundraising and community engagement event. If you can help please do. We are also operating the Plant Sale at the ARS convention over a period of 5 days and volunteers are needed there.

Contact Ian Efford if you can help at the ARS convention.