

Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society

Newsletter

Volume 33:8 October 2022

Message from the President

Waiting for rain.....

It is hard to believe it is October and the weather still sunny and warm. The long late spring meant I did not have my usual August "I am tired of watering and don't care if it dies" fit of pique from being attached to the end of a hose. But I am starting to feel twinges now, mainly directed at the annuals. At least this warm weather will ensure the ripening of wood and buds, so we don't go into the winter with soft growth on the branch tips, a sure recipe for damaged bud come spring.

I am embarrassed to admit this, but my rather erratic watering schedule has demonstrated how well Rhodos can come back from a wilted state. Within 15-30 minutes of being watered the plant has bounced back and shown no signs of its previous thirst. Not that I am recommending this as a protocol, just that the plant is often tougher than its good looks and reputation might make you think. PWP, or Permanent Wilting Point, an acronym drilled into our brains in college is no laughing matter, the point at which there is no return to a healthy and water filled plant. It can no longer replenish itself. I am sure many of us have come out to find a plant crumpled and lifeless, hanging over the edge of the pot, its dried and crumpled leaves a reproach to our cavalier attitude to its welfare.

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CVRS October Meeting

Wednesday
October 5, 2022
7:30 pm

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Banner Photo:

Callicarpa bodinieri; *Acer palmatum* 'Shojo'; *Ulmus hollandica* 'Jacqueline Hillier'

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At this time of year, an *annual* counts as no-loss (picking on the annuals again) and a *perennial* was going to die down soon anyway. However, shrubs are a different matter. It is easy to be complacent about watering with the cooler nights, and to take the plant to the edge, so to speak. While a lessening of water is good for hardening off, and you certainly don't want to keep the plant in a lush state, it can go too far. You still may have to give a good watering or two, before the winter rains return in earnest, especially those plants that were only installed in their new home this year.

In the meantime, I have unearthed my raingear and pushed the waterproof hat back into shape.

Hopefully I will need it soon.

Barrie Agar

Renew Your CVRS Membership

September, October, November are the months to renew your CVRS membership by paying your fees

For the last two years, due to the restrictions imposed by the COVID pandemic guidelines and resultingly fewer activities being offered, the CVRS membership fees were reduced. However, the American Rhododendron Society fees still needed to be covered, so the CVRS subsidized the fees to the ARS for these two years.

This year, the fees for new or renewal are being restored to regular levels.

FEES FOR 2022 – 2023:

Adult Membership: \$40
Associate Membership: \$10

David Annis, CVRS Membership Chair, will welcome your payments at the monthly Wednesday meetings, where you may pay by cheque or exact change. You may choose to:

- **Mail a Cheque:** David Annis, 5974 Tower Place, Duncan, BC, V9L 0E1
- **E-Transfer auto deposit:** email to: cowichanvalleyrhododendron@gmail.com
- **Drop off your fee:** David's front door (near the Hospital) Call 250-748-1338 first!

Thank-you,

David

October Perennial Stars

Our Watering Efforts in Fall
Offer Diversity for Nature's Pollinators



Scott Black, Executive Director of the Xerces Society states:

The science is clear: It is impossible to address the loss of biodiversity without addressing climate change, but equally impossible to tackle the full impacts of climate change without working to protect and enhance biodiversity.

With well over one million known species, insects and other invertebrates eclipse all other forms of life on Earth. They are essential to the reproduction of most flowering plants, including many fruits, vegetables, and nuts; they are food for birds, fish, and other animals; they filter water and help clean rivers and streams; and they clean up waste from plants and animals.

Though they are indisputably important, insects and other invertebrates are experiencing a multicontinental crisis evident as reductions in abundance, diversity and biomass. Given the centrality of insects to terrestrial and freshwater aquatic ecosystems and the food chain that supports humans, the potential importance of this crisis cannot be overstated.

Platycodon grandiflorus 'Pop Star Blue' (Above)

Delphinium becomes a nectar stop for a grateful bee

Tricyrtus hirta (Toad Lily)





Photos clockwise:

***Cyclamen*'s white wings flutter at ground level**

Hummingbirds perform marathon backstrokes beneath the long pendulant tubular flowers of *Phygelius capensis*

***Sedum* 'Autumn Joy' spreads its name**

Enormous satiny blooms of *Hibiscus moscheutos* 'Kopper King' above a bushy four-foot clump of coppery-red foliage invite a number of bees at once

Hummingbirds and bees frequently sip nectars together on *Salvia guaranitica* 'Black and Blue'



CVRS OCTOBER MEETING

Wednesday, October 5, 2022
7:30 pm

Tamara Dinter

Presentation



Healthy Soil

"If your soil could talk, what would it say?"

Give your soil a physical!

- What makes soil healthy?
- How does healthy soil help create a healthy ecosystem?
- How are carbon and minerals important to healthy soil?
- How are living organisms important to healthy soil?

Tamara has a Bachelor of Science from the University of Victoria and two Master of Science degrees in Agriculture and Environmental Science.

She specialized in soil science for her graduate thesis work, ultimately travelling to the Galapagos Islands to participate in filming and producing a documentary on the soil resources of the remote archipelago.

Tamara returned to join her family business, Dinter Nursery, in 2020 and is currently the General Manager.

St. John's Anglican Church Hall
486 Jubilee Street
Duncan, B.C.

Letter from the Editor

Happy Autumn Friends,

Many people consider Fall as the finest of the seasons. Certainly, much can be said about the magic offered as summer submits to winter. Although we may wish to hold on to summer for longer, we cannot dismiss the changes about us. We are aware that all of our senses are responding, often simultaneously. In this issue, we will note *how*, and some reasons *why*, Autumn evokes special responses deep within us.

At this time of year, we enjoy the feast of the fields and our labours, our gardens producing more than we can eat, serve or process. What is better than garden-to-table-fresh beans, cucumbers, tomatoes, kohlrabi, cabbage, and squash? Not much, and we are grateful.

One the items on the Fall Tasks List in September's newsletter, was reviewing the most recent garden experience, making notes of successes, and planning for improving aspects that failed. I made a few notes: our strawberry crop was abundant, and the freezer shelf holds fresh frozen strawberries and freezer jam. The cold wet spring, however, reduced pollination of fruit tree blossoms in our garden, resulting in very few apples and pears. Difficult to change except for some hand pollination, a labour intensive task in spring. Our everbearing raspberry plants appeared to have drowned in last November's flooding downpours producing almost no crop in June. Thankfully, the plants have begun to recover by growing short fall canes, only one-third the height that they would normally have grown in the season but also producing a few raspberries for fresh eating. Improving drainage and adding some compost should assist in their recovery.

Our blueberries appeared promising with large clusters of berries nearing the stage of ripening when suddenly they all shrivelled within days. They had been struck by *Monilinia vaccinii-corymbosi*, also known as *mummy berry*. Apparently, unique weather conditions of wet periods with prolonged cold periods, approximately 1000 hours of temperatures between 0-7 C, will cause the fungus to germinate. Our anticipated two months of fresh blueberry antioxidant-loading routines disappeared. Thankfully, during the past two weeks, enough blueberries on our later variety 'Elliot' ripened for an end-of-season treat. We learned that we will need to rake and bury the "mummies" under at least two inches of mulch this fall to prevent the fungus from returning next spring.

The wine grape harvest has also been affected by converging weather conditions. Despite efforts made early to ensure plenty of airflow through the cluster-bearing portion of the vines, mildew still struck two varieties, the 'Siegerrebe' and 'Ortega'. Our commitment to organic practices meant that sprays weren't an option for us. Mineral oil applications seemed to curtail the spread of the mildew, but also seemed to restrict the sweetening and ripening process, so two varietal wines won't be racked this year. We should be able to harvest and produce wine from our 'Epicure' and 'Petit Milo' varieties, both more disease-resistant Blattner of Switzerland hybrids. We will debate replacing the susceptible varieties with more resistant vines should climate conditions continue to destroy crops. So, a quick review calls for ambitious work now and through the winter. Of course, there are many more items on that Fall Task List!

Letter from the Editor cont'd

Enjoy the photos of our first indoor In-Person monthly meeting held in September. The event was enjoyable and educational for those who attended.

Hopefully many of you will apply what you learned about propagation from Al Murray and the club will have numerous plants for the plant sales in the future.

Over the last several years, Ali Morris faithfully contributed a monthly newsletter article, *Companion Plant of the Month*. These were knowledgeable and thorough, and when she handed the task to Carrie, who unfortunately realized almost immediately, that personal circumstances meant she could not fulfil the task, a gap that you could ride your dusty Kubota through was left in the newsletter. So, if any one of you believe you would like to fill this space, please do contact me. In the meantime, I have noticed that each month, trees, shrubs, or perennials step forward to take central stage in the garden while others retreat to regenerate after their performances. So, a few pages in each issue will highlight these monarchs of the month.



Clematis with *Actaea* blooming in September and October

Your photo and article contributions are always appreciated. I know our members welcome new voices in the newsletter, so consider being part of the *new expressions and points of view*, or heaven forbid, you might find 'Musings' in the issues when I am struggling for content!

I hope to see all of you and hear from you soon,

Verna Buhler

AL MURRAY DEMONSTRATED 'PUTTING DOWN ROOTS' at the CVRS September Meeting



Photo: Barrie Agar

Al explains how any interested CVRS member can become a successful small-time propagator of rhododendrons. All the items needed are on table in front of him.



Photo: Barrie Agar



Photo: Barrie Agar



Photo: Dorothy Kennedy

The kit Al describes is compact but can propagate 32 new rhododendrons in a season.

The kit has a small heat mat and a thermostat and hood.

The rooting medium is simple: a 60% perlite and 40% peat moss mix

Other items: a sharp knife or snips, mild bleach solution for disinfecting tools; a bottle of #3 rooting hormone powder; collected cuttings in baggies



Photo: Dorothy Kennedy

Members watch carefully as Al, with a sharp clean knife, shows how to prepare the cutting before applying the hormone.



Photo: Dorothy Kennedy



Barrie's photo reveals that more has been done to the cutting before it is ready for the tray. When it is ready, the rhododendron cutting is stuck into the moist medium where it will remain during the winter as it sprouts new roots ready for transplanting next May or June.

Candice Feeney was the lucky winner of the draw for a new propagating kit that Al Murray generously donated to the CVRS Club for the Meeting.

This quick PHOTO REPORT of Al Murray's presentation shows the basic steps of propagating.

There are a few more steps to the process of preparing the cuttings for sticking that have not been explained here.

Certainly Al, or a number of other club members who propagate rhododendrons, would answer any questions that you might have as you venture into this enjoyable and rewarding activity.

Revisit the February 2021 CVRS newsletter for a detailed article on Al Murray's propagating methods



Photo: Barrie Agar

Autumnal Musings

Autumn symbolizes maturity, change, preservation, abundance and wealth, reconnection, balance, and withering or letting go.

I was surrounded by hissing, roaring fire soaring into the blackness and lighting a stadium-sized area around me in brilliant orange light. Then, just four feet in front of me, more monstrous flames erupted. I grinned, cheeks scarlet, as I stepped back from the heat that lit up my face and singed my brows and brunette braid. I forked up some of the flames and ran between flaming bonfires to another flax pile, sending more flax oils crackling and spitting metres into the night sky. An entire quarter section was ablaze as my mother, my siblings and I performed one of our farm harvesting duties. Once we stepped outside our orange dome, we felt a kinship with the Sahulka, Borne, and Derkach families, who we knew by the rosy domes miles away in the prairie blackness, were also out that evening performing those same farm rituals.

Burning in fall was not only a farming practice. Robin Wall Kimmerer, the author of *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*, a book I am slowly savouring, describes ancient burning rituals.

“He walks the path in the nightfall with a bundle in his hand. Into a nest of cedar bark and twisted grass he lays the coal and feeds it with his breath. It dances and then subsides. Smoke pools darkly as the grasses melt to black and then erupt into flame, climbing one stem and then another. . .

They are burning the headland. Flames race on the wind until they are stopped by the wet green wall of the forest. . . The burning prairie billows smoke, roiling white with undersides of salmon in the darkness. They mean for it to say, “Come, come, flesh of my flesh. My brothers. Come back to the river where our lives began. We have made a welcome feast in your honor.”

Fires are one of the associations humans have with autumn. Fall cleanup, Halloween bonfires, fireside chats with friends. Fires beckon us to join with others. Just yesterday, on impulse, I suggested the chiminea on our patio as that evening’s venue for our year-round-Friday girls’ “meeting” (texting code-word for debriefing sessions after the stressful teacher work week) at a wine bar or pub. The atmosphere was perfect -- crisp air, slanted evening light, crackle of fire, wood smoke and relaxed contented faces of friends.

It is definitely here – the season that positively stimulates every one of our senses, often simultaneously. Autumn awakens deep responses, difficult to describe, and stirs up nostalgic memories. What are those associations that elicit feelings that even the most pragmatic of us experience so strongly? *Change is happening both around us and within us whether we consciously agree to it or not.*

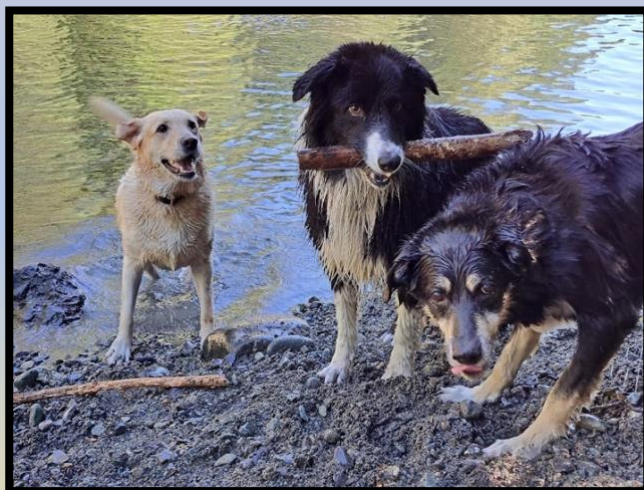
The Fall Equinox has occurred -- the day, September 22nd -- and now the sun's intense rays are shifting to the Southern Hemisphere. We feel it first, the pleasantly cooling temperatures, relief from the constant heat. Sections of our closets seem foreign to us as we try to recall what we used to bundle ourselves many hot months ago.

The buzz of hummingbirds at the feeder outside the bedroom window used to provide a gentle wakeup call. These days the hummers aren't showing up for the 6am decaf coffee. Instead, stars are dotting the darkness. In the evenings, we relax outdoors as normal, perhaps a wine glass beside us, a book in our hands, and stubborn dirt under our nails; we note that the garden appears even more beautiful in the lower slant of the sun's rays. Soon our eyes strain to see the words on the page, so we pile some wood beside the chiminea and light the dry prunings. We also collect a cozy fleece wrap. Yes -- daylight hours are shortening, and temperatures are dropping.

The result of fewer hours of sunlight is spectacular leaf colour. Plants produce glucose, their energy source for respiration – breathing in carbon dioxide and exhaling oxygen. Producing glucose is a slow process, but sunlight speeds up the chemical reaction through *chlorophyll* in the leaves that capture and absorb sunlight, the red and blue parts of the visible spectrum, leaving only the green to be reflected. Chlorophyll is the most dominant of chemicals inside the leaves, but others such as *carotinoid*, responsible for the yellow, orange and brown colours, and *anthocyanin*, creating reds are always present in plants. When photosynthesis dwindles and halts as daylight declines, other colours layered beneath, become visible. Then, leaves that have given so much to sustain life in the trees, become a burden to them, and are dropped.

Our activities begin to change as well. Once the ice is installed at the local arena, much to our labs' disappointment, those near daily outings to the river become alternating-day adventures. Outings shift to the mountains, to longer steeper hiking and mountain bike trails. It's time for everyone to get back into shape after lolling in the heat.

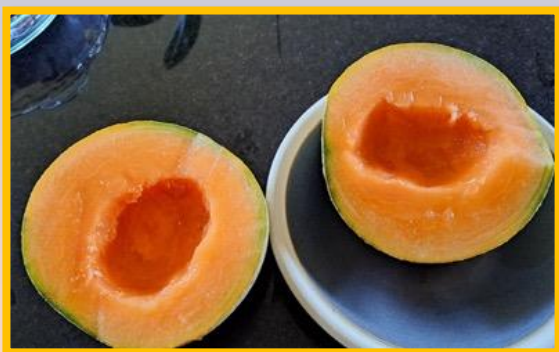
With his leanness and speed, the border collie adapts quickly; he enjoys first-place ribbons that he repeatedly lost to water-loving labs all summer.



We also hear different sounds in fall. Overhead, the approach of migrating geese long before they arrive in the airspace above us. The honking of geese as they practice for their long journey is a sure sign that winter is coming. Geese are louder in flight than they are on the ground. Researchers think that the honking sound geese make as they fly is used to help the integrity of the flock and to coordinate position shifts with the V-formation in which they fly.

Frog songs that we haven't heard during the summer months begin hesitantly but then soon gain confidence, belting out their croaks from nearby shrubbery and ponds. Frog croaks are mating calls, and frogs mate in spring. So why the frog songs in fall? One theory is that as far as the bodies of frogs are concerned, they are only minutes away from breeding when they shut down in fall. They need to be physiologically prepared for calling and breeding in the spring as soon as they thaw out. Their body temperatures may be below freezing when they are in the leaf litter during the winter – essentially in cold storage. They have to be ready to breed when they enter the leaf litter.

Bountiful harvests of fresh produce and healthy feasts are highlights of Fall. Until several years ago, I did not have much success growing my childhood favourite fall fruit, melons and cantaloupes. As youngsters growing up on a farm in the Prairies, our natural activity upon arriving home from school was a trip to the garden to select some fine melons as our fast-food snack. Our parents would be on the fields harvesting grain and we were expected to visit the self-serve garden. I would slice a melon in half, scoop the seeds out, pour cream into the valleys and slowly, as I ate, carve a landscape of trails for horseback riding on the slopes.



It was always disappointing that temperatures on the West Coast were simply too moderate to grow luscious melons.

Now, only a few years later, climate changes mean that I can go to the garden, select a sun-ripened cantaloupe or melon, and once again, instead of munching on plastic, savour the sweet rich flavour of a *real* melon.

In our gardens, produce is rich, ready, and tasty; harvesting activities consume our hours. Having grown up on a farm in the Prairies, Autumn reminds me of long hours of work. My mother's apron would be pregnant with beans and as she spilled them onto the harvest table in the kitchen, she would call out, "Girls, the beans are ready. You need to come here now. Destem and chop them." She would fill the blancher with water, then rush back to the garden with buckets. After numerous treks back and forth, Mt Prevost formed on the table. We always groaned, as our next weeks were defined for us. We took for granted the large serving bowls of healthy home-grown meals from which we generously served ourselves at every meal, every day, every year.

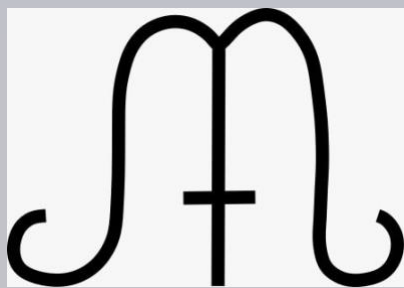
I didn't know at that time that I would escape the hard-working farm life of the prairies to live near Mt. Prevost on the West Coast, nor that I would eventually choose to adopt some of the lifestyle that I would leave behind for many years as I pursued a teaching career. But I have become so very grateful for those bountiful childhood blessings, the privilege of never experiencing hunger, the lessons about growing healthy food for my family and others, and the very full pantries and freezers of home-grown food.

Autumn brings pleasant aromas. Whiffs of wood burning campfires drift through neighborhoods. *Katsura* leaves are burnt caramel to some of us and cotton candy to others. Is fresh moist air an aroma? My descriptive efforts fail; it smells uniquely like fresh moist air. A walk through the woods or garden in fall reminds me that my favourite fall scent of all, is that of rich soil. Failing again to find comparisons, I decided to research for a description of that soothing fragrance. There is a lovely description in Robin Kimmerer's book, *Braiding Sweetgrass*. It is the scent of humus,

"the spongy structure that looks and feels like moist chocolate cake. . . [absorbed] elements emitted by animals and plants in varying stages of decay." She goes on to say that recent research has shown that *"the smell of humus exerts a physiological effect on humans. Breathing in the scent of Mother Earth stimulates the release of the hormone oxytocin, the same chemical that promotes bonding between mother and child."*

Small wonder then, that we as gardeners enjoy our healthy soil so much. With some of our help and rainy weather, the hard, parched ground of the dry summer can be restored to *"soil that feeds, reproduces, suppresses disease, fixes nitrogen, and retains moisture; creating a womb in which plants can grow"* – namely, richly scented humus.

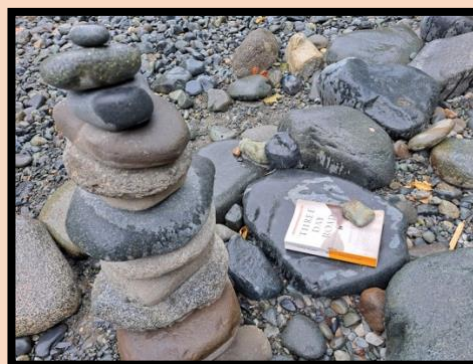
And what of balance and withering? We witness the natural process of withering of plants in our gardens and we accept that natural process. We have already gently cut back our bulbs and perennials after flowering, leaving enough foliage for the plants to build energy reserves from the sunlight. When the foliage becomes yellow and brown, we will remove the rest.

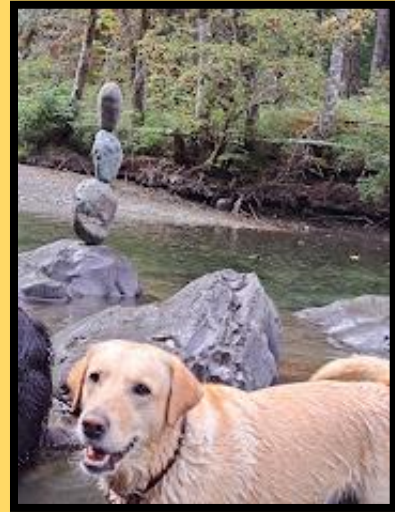


This Germanic symbol of Autumn is two-fold. The downward facing cross in the middle is an indicator of life, crops and seeds going beneath the earth to rest for the winter. The rounded M-shape resembles the astrological sign for Scorpio, prevalent from late October to late November as cold weather is moving in.

In human terms, fall is a period of transitions when we respond to shorter periods of daylight and to cooler temperatures. We withdraw from the outdoors, tend to sleep more, drink less energizing water, and often become less active. We juggle and adjust to create a new balance in our lives.

The river swimming holes are quiet now that yellow leaves drift along on small currents. Left behind at the river are marks of summer activities, of musings, of quiet inspirations, and of humans' innate tendencies to connect with nature. There are indications of human imagination, ingenuity and desire to manipulate materials to build – to achieve balance.





The river architect demonstrated amazing rock balancing skills. The rocks are large, the smallest about a foot in length, precariously balanced on other irregularly shaped rocks with minimal contact points. Dogs dancing in the water nearby sent splashes on the rock, but it remained steady. I am curious to see how long it will stay in place and also curious as what will cause its ultimate collapse.

I could muse about its metaphor for life, but you no doubt have already questioned what this article has to do with rhododendrons or even gardens. I can honestly say, it doesn't. It has to do with us -- with people and how we all are affected by autumn. Perhaps the article triggered a few of your own positive reflections. This began when I was looking for a short filler and decided to address Autumn as a topic. Musings happened.

The rhododendron part follows this article. Rhododendrons are still growing strongly in our gardens. Those in pots are waiting for the first rains to fall so they can be planted. Many rhododendrons have some red and yellow leaves as they too shed some of their almost-always-evergreen foliage. Collecting cuttings is best left to wetter times when plants are well-hydrated. And so, some of us are simply waiting for the fall rhododendron season to begin.

Finally, after a final edit, this newsletter can be posted and I, in my own attempt to find balance, I will pull on warm slippers, wrap myself in a fleece comforter, fix a very large mug of tea and settle down to watch a hockey game.

Enjoy this fine season.

~ Verna ~

Rhododendron faithiae

In April 2020, I first wrote about this new species rhododendron, quoting Steve Hootman who said, “*This is sure to be a widely grown and popular new species in gardens.*”

Now, we have an opportunity to see how it has performed in our Pacific North West gardens.



Steve Hootman, Plant Hunter, and Executive Director and Curator of the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden described the discovery of this rhododendron:

“One of the most exciting finds Peter Cox and I have ever had together.”

Rhododendron faithiae is a very rare species, known from only two or three locations in the wild. It is a member of Subsection **Fortunea** and is probably most closely related to ***R. hemsleyanum*** and the recently introduced ***R. serotinum***.

Some of the characteristics that it shares with these two other species is its large fragrant flowers blooming very late in the season, and its large habit and impressively big and bold foliage. It was a spectacular plant in the wild with large elliptic leaves to ten inches or more in length.



The new growth of *Rhododendron faithiae* is a rich bronze in colour with significantly etched veins.

Photo: Evan Bean

Ken and Madeleine Webb were one of the first club members to plant ***Rhododendron faithiae*** in their gardens. In 2020, their plant was still in a pot. In only two years, the rhododendron has grown into a lovely specimen.

On September 21st Madeleine posted a photo of this lovely species:

“Rhododendron faithiae is bestowing its magnificent fragrance through the whole garden. Last year it only had one bloom!”

What a treasure!



CARYOPTERIS

A Stunning Fall Shrub for Dry Spots in the Garden

Plants in the genus *Caryopteris* are not really ideal companion plants for rhododendrons, as they do not enjoy moist, cool growing conditions.



Caryopteris x clandonensis 'Beyond Midnight'
Photo: Proven Winners

Having said that, however, with the climate changes we are experiencing most of us find that parts of our yards or even individual garden beds are becoming difficult to irrigate adequately for moisture demanding plants. These well-drained places require drought tolerant shrubs and trees. *Caryopteris* could effectively fill such needs in our mixed or shrub borders.

Caryopteris are small to medium-sized, two to three feet in height and width, mounded woody shrubs cultivated for their attractive, aromatic foliage and usually blue flowers. They have opposite toothed leaves and small blue flowers from late summer to autumn. The six species are native to the Himalayas and East Asia. The cultivars *Caryopteris x clandonensis* are commonly referred to as Bluebeard or blue mist spirea -- although they are not even remotely related to spirea at all. These deciduous shrubs are in the Lamiaceae (mint) family, a hybrid cross between *C. incana* and *C. mongholica*. Its common name derives from the bright blue base petal of the flower that is elongated like a beard.

Plant *Caryopteris* in a sunny spot and very well-drained soil. Wet soils, particularly those that remain soggy during periods of cold weather, will cause root rot. Fertilizer may cause them to become lanky.

Blooms form on the current season's growth. *Caryopteris* should be cut back every spring to ensure sturdy, dense growth. You may give it a light trim in late autumn, once it has gone dormant, to remove the old flowers and eliminate possible seed spread. However, do not cut into any thick, woody stems until new growth begins to emerge in spring. Then, cut the whole plant back to just above where large, healthy buds are emerging. After severe winters, and we have had a few recently, the shrubs may need to be hard pruned in spring, but because they are hardy to Zone 5, they will continue to thrive.

As a late season attractive bloomer, bees, butterflies and hummingbirds swarm to these shrubs shrouding the plant with humming and fluttering. The plants themselves were flying out of Dinter's Nursery at high speed several weeks ago.

Caryopteris is not identified as invasive but its seeds can be scattered by wind and it can be addictive. A number of varieties are available.



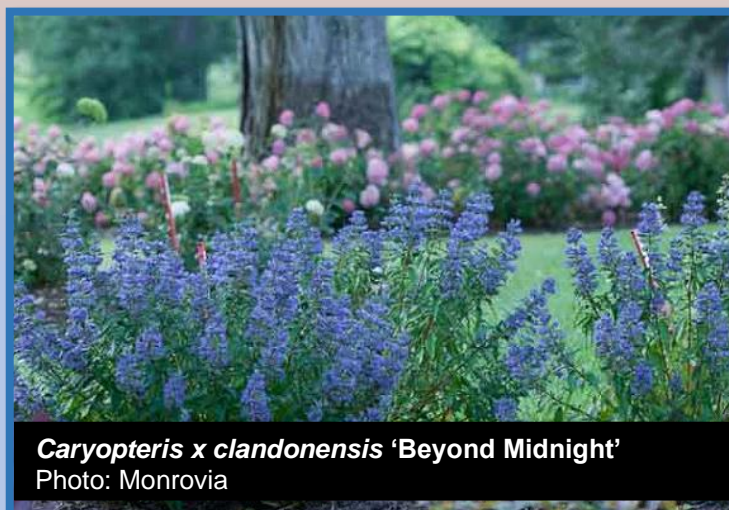
***Caryopteris x clandonensis* 'Dark Knight'**
Photo: Monrovia

Caryopteris x clandonensis 'Dark Knight' is one variety that is readily available. It's shimmering greyish foliage is lovely in small group plantings.

Caryopteris x clandonensis 'Beyond Midnight' is appreciated for its extremely dark, glossy foliage and deep blue flowers.



C. 'Gold Crest'
Photo: The Garden Corner



***Caryopteris x clandonensis* 'Beyond Midnight'**
Photo: Monrovia

Several varieties such as C. 'Gold Crest' and several *Caryopteris incana* Sunshine Blue series, with bright yellow-green foliage, are also popular.



HEPTACODIUM

A Champion Tree in Fall



Two other trees, *Franklinia alatamaha* and *Oxydendrum arboretum* were both strong contenders for the Fall Tree Championship title on my property in North Cowichan.

It was the pollinators that made a very clear choice for *Heptacodium miconioides*.

All three trees are blooming now in late September, early October. All three have deep green foliage that turns to brilliant colours as daylight decreases in Fall. All deserved an opportunity in the contest.

I could hear the buzz around the tree before I looked up to witness the voting frenzy. As I shot a number of photographs, I wished I was an entomophile and could identify the variety of pollinators attending the 2022 *Heptacodium* Convention



Interestingly, *Franklinia alatamaha* has only been documented in the wild in a small two or three-acre area along the banks of the Altamaha River. The most recent scientific documentation was by the English horticulturist John Lyon in 1803, at which time the stand seemed to be already in decline. It has been considered extinct in the wild since the mid-1840s, at the latest.



Oxydendrum arboreum, commonly called Sourwood or Sorrel Tree is a deciduous understory tree that is native to the eastern United States from Pennsylvania south to Florida and Louisiana. It is most commonly found on rocky wooded slopes of the Appalachian Mountains, often growing with other heath family members such as azaleas and rhododendrons that share the same acidic soil preferences.

It earned its common name because of the leaves, which are edible and leave a very sour taste in your mouth.

Heptacodium miconioides, also known as Seven-Son Flower, is a fast growing or small deciduous tree that was first discovered and brought to the West from China by E. H. Wilson.

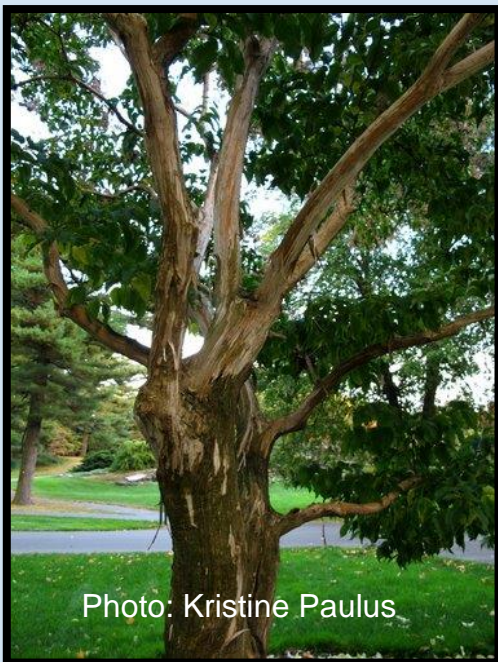


Photo: Kristine Paulus

It is a magnificent four-season tree:

In spring, the leaves are large, deep green, narrowly-heart shaped with deep veins.

In summer, bark exfoliates in light-tan strips against a chalky-white background.

Early autumn, brings fragrant, creamy white clusters of seven flowers produced in terminal panicles

In late autumn, bright pink calyces remain after flowers fall and persist until frost. Spectacular small, cerise-to-purplish, rounded fruits form beneath the calyces.

Fall foliage is yellow and long-lasting.

Winter reveals the beautiful bone structure of the tree and the lovely grey-tan foliage

~~~~~ UPCOMING EVENTS ~~~~~



2022 Fall into Gardening

"Coping with Climate Instability in your Garden"

MARS (Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society), **NRS** (Nanaimo Rhododendron Society), and **VIMGA** (Vancouver Island Master Gardeners Association) are pleased to offer a day of education and enjoyment with internationally recognized gardening experts.

Tickets: \$25 in advance or \$30 at the door

See NRS website for details about **how to register:** <http://nanaimorhodos.ca/>

- ☐ **Date:** **Sunday, October 23, 2022**
- ☐ **Location:** Qualicum Beach Civic Centre
747 Jones St. Qualicum Beach, B.C. V9K 1S7
- ☐ **Time:** 10:00 AM to 3:30 PM

10:00 AM – 10:05 AM	Introductory Remarks
10:05 AM – 11:00 AM	Douglas Justice: UBC Botanical Garden Associate Director and Curator "Planting Trees for a Drier and Hotter Future"
11:00 AM – 11:20 AM	Break
11:20 AM – 12:15 PM	Caroline Josefsson: Vancouver Island University Biology Department "Gardening with less water – learning from the Garry Oak Ecosystem"
12:15 PM – 1:15 PM	Lunch
1:15 PM – 2:10 PM	Des Kennedy: writer, activist, celebrated speaker "Weather or Not" a light hearted romp through the triumphs and travails of the weather-beaten gardener
2:10 PM – 2:30 PM	Break
2:30 PM – 3:25 PM	Bonnie Zand: Entomologist and owner of Bonnie's Bugs IPM "Gardening for bees" supporting BC's diverse native bees
3:25 PM – 3:30 PM	Closing Remarks

Refreshments: coffee, tea, and treats will be provided. **Please bring your own bag lunch.**



Fall into Gardening: Speaker Abstracts

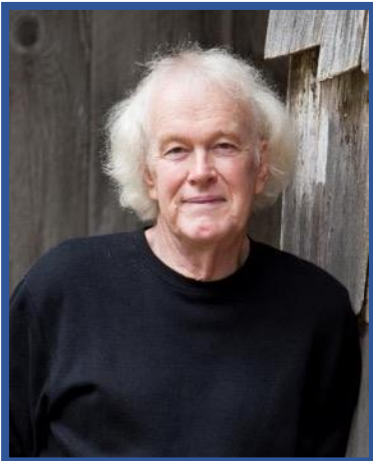


Douglas Justice presents “*Planting Trees for a Drier and Hotter Future*”

There is increasing awareness among gardeners, if not the public at large, for the need to reconsider many of our planting choices. Numerous factors contribute to this change in perspective, but climate change, sustainability in horticultural practices and the biodiversity crisis are paramount among them. Douglas’s presentation will address tree selection in light of these issues.

Douglas had his initial exposure to horticulture in his parents' garden in Vancouver and at the family farm in Duncan. His passion for plants eventually led him into nursery work, then to degrees in horticulture and botany, which spurred him to pursue a career in teaching and public garden management. For the last two decades, Douglas’s job has been Associate Director, Horticulture & Collections at UBC Botanical Garden. He teaches in UBC's Landscape Architecture program and in the Botanical Garden's Horticulture Training Program and is currently working on a manual of Vancouver's cultivated woody plants.

Des Kennedy presents “*Weather or Not – a light-hearted romp through the triumphs and travails of the weather-beaten gardener*”



Des Kennedy is a writer, an activist and seasoned back-to-the-lander. He and his partner Sandy have for the last 50 years lived a conserver lifestyle on Denman Island. Their gardens, hand-built house and surrounding woodlands are regularly featured on the Denman Island Home and Garden Tour.

A celebrated speaker, Des is the author of ten books, in both fiction and non-fiction. He has been three times nominated for the Stephen Leacock Memorial Medal for Humour. His latest book is a novel titled *Beautiful Communion* (Ronsdale Press).

Caroline Jossefson presents “*Gardening with less water – learning from the Garry Oak Ecosystem*”



Climate projections suggest that summers in our region will become increasingly warmer and drier, presenting challenges to gardeners. Can we look to our local flora, our region’s ancient history, and traditional ecological practices for solutions? The Garry oak ecosystem is a species-rich, drought- adapted plant community that originates in a warm dry period of British Columbia’s ancient past, 8,000 to 6,000 years ago. As the climate became cooler and moister about 6,000 years ago, the ecosystem was protected from encroaching conifers by Coast Salish Peoples who benefitted from the game and edible plants associated with it. The Garry oak

ecosystem can serve as a model for sustainable gardening in our area, one that honours our region's cultural history and its biodiversity. *"I will speak to my experience of gardening with Garry oak ecosystem-associated plants in my small front yard in Nanaimo, and suggest resources for information, seeds, and plants."*

Born and raised in the southwest of Sweden, Caroline's life-long interest in plants and plant propagation originates from her grandmothers, who were keen gardeners, house plant keepers and observers of nature. At the Swedish University of Agriculture, Caroline pursued an undergraduate degree in Horticulture and Biology. For her doctorate at the University of Washington she studied gene deregulation stemming from hybridization in the plant model system *Arabidopsis*. Caroline joined the Biology Department at Vancouver Island University in 2009. There she teaches plant biology courses, as well as courses in genetics and biochemistry. In 2020, together with students from VIU's Eco Club, Caroline initiated a Garry oak ecosystem restoration project on the VIU campus.

Bonnie Zand presents "Gardening for bees: supporting BC's diverse native bees"



When most people think of bees, they think of honey bees. But did you know that there are more than 450 different bee species in BC? They are incredibly diverse in size, appearance and lifestyle, and are vitally important for pollination of both food crops and wild plants.

Learn to observe and appreciate some of these less well-known pollinators, find out what challenges they are facing, and learn what you can do within your own gardens to support native bees!

Bonnie Zand is the owner of Bonnie's Bugs IPM, a private consulting company working with farmers to manage insect pests on Vancouver Island. She is currently running the Vancouver Island Pests, Pollinators and Beneficials Project. Bonnie holds a BSc in biology from UVic, is a board member of the Native Bee Society of BC and is part of the recovery implementation group for the endangered Taylor's checkerspot butterfly.

Bonnie is also the BC instructor for the Master Melittologist program. In her spare time, she likes to look for interesting native bees and other insects, raise mason bees, garden with native plants and instill a love of insects in her five-year-old daughter.

**Do Try to Attend this
EXCELLENT EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL EVENT!**

OCTOBER 23, 2022 10am – 3pm

To Register : <http://nanaimorhodos.ca/>

2021 – 2022

Calendar of Events

Contact CVRS:

cowichanvalleyrhododendron@gmail.com

Wednesday, October 5, 2022 7:30 pm

CVRS September Meeting

Tamara Dinter: *Soils*

Thursday October 6, 2022 7:30pm

Victoria Rhododendron Society

Propagating Practices: Glendale Gardens

Tuesday, October 11, 2022 7:30pm

North island Rhododendron Society

Leslie Cox: *Changing Climate Affecting Gardens* (Comox United Church Hall)

Wednesday October 12, 2022 7:30pm

Mt Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society

John Deniseger: *Why I Grow Rhododendrons* (Qualicum Beach Civic Center)

Milner Gardens and Woodland Events:

Fall openings through October 2nd: Thursday thru Sunday from 11am to 4:30 with viewing until 5pm. **October openings:** Friday and Saturdays from 11am to 3:00 with viewing until 3:30. Check the Milner website for details: Milner Garden Events

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY EVENTS

2022:

ARS Fall Eastern Regional Conference, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Dates to be determined.

2023:

ARS Fall Western Regional Conference, Florence, Oregon. Dates to be determined.

2023:

ARS Annual Convention, Atlanta, Georgia. Joint ARS/ASA meeting. Dates to be determined.

USEFUL LINKS

Cowichan Rhododendron Society:

cowichanrhodos.ca/

Victoria Rhododendron Society:

victoriarhodo.ca/index.html

Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society:

marsrhodos.ca/

North Island Rhododendron Society:

nirsrhodos.ca/ws/

The American Rhododendron Society:

rhododendron.org/

Nanaimo Rhododendron Society:

nanaimorhodos.ca

Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden:

rhodygarden.org

Nanoose Garden Club:

nanoosegardenclub.ca/

Linda Gilkeson:

lindagilkeson.ca/

Vancouver Island Rock and Garden Society:

virags.com

Linda Chalker-Scott:

<https://puyallup.wsu.edu/lcs/>

Steve Henning:

rhodyman.net

Rhododendron, Camellia, Magnolia

<https://www.rhodogroup-rhs.org/>



Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society

A Chapter of the American
Rhododendron Society P.O. Box 904
Duncan, British Columbia V9L 3Y2

<http://cowichanrhodos.ca>

2022-2023 Executive

President: Barrie Agar
Vice-President: Dorothy Kennedy
Treasurer: Diane Allen
Secretary: Mary Pike
Director-at-Large: Wendy Willson
Director-at-Large: Candice Feeney
Director-at-Large: Sandy Campbell
Director-at-Large: Ali Morris
Membership Chairperson: David Annis

Convenors

Sunshine: Vacant
Tea: Judeen Hendrickson
Raffle: Hilda Gerrits
Program Planning: The Executive Team
Fundraising: The Executive Team
CVRS Garden Tours: Candice Feeney
CVRS Bus Tours: TBA
Library: Verna Buhler
Newsletter: Verna Buhler