



The **Rhodoholic**



Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society

Volume 26:8 November 2015

President's Message

What a wonderful fall we are enjoying, but I have to tell you, I am looking forward to weather that allows me to rest! With the exception of the time spent watching the election, I am pooped from an extended year of gardening. It was last February when my husband and I were working in our hot little ecosystem on the south side of our house, the temperature 26 degrees, and it seems like we have been at it since.

This month we have done the usual garden clean-up and planting of garlic, we also still have fruit to pick and flowers to enjoy. Fruit from a second flush of figs actually ripened which has never happened before and we have a good crop of persimmon still on the tree which is better left until frosted. Tomatoes and cucumbers are still hanging in the greenhouse!



Nizette, one of our featured rhodo hybrids beginning with the letter N.

Wednesday, November 4

CVRS Monthly Meeting:

The Rhododendron Gardens of New Zealand

Dr. Glen Jamieson on his recent tour of this fascinating southern hemisphere country

7:30 pm

More details on page 3.

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Blooming, we have a rhodo, an Azalea (Lemon Lights), nerine bowdenii lilies, trycirtis hirta (toad) lilies, Kerria Japonica 'Pleniflora', mums, asters, Hebe 'autumn glory or black beauty,' cyclamen, rosemary, schizostylis lilies, reblooming crocsmia, a yellow climbing rose and dahlias.

The fall leaves of the Acers) are lovely, and Fothergilla, Stewartia, and Cornus are equally stunning.



The rhodos have a particularly heavy bud set; I am keeping my fingers crossed that they come to fruition in the Spring as I understand drought conditions during the set period can lead to bud drop. I also took about 200 rhodo cuttings this year. From the cutting compostables, I salvaged the marvelous leaves that have indumentum -one more reason to love rhodos!

Looking forward, I will be working with the board to review our constitution and develop procedures that



reflect the growing nature of the CVRS in light of the new BC Society Act. If anyone has a hankering for that type of exercise, please contact me.

I am also looking forward to our November general meeting where I can relax and enjoy a presentation by Dr. Glen Jamieson, an avid plant hunter, who will present on New Zealand. We will see you all there!

Carrie Nelson

This month in the *Rhodoholic*
we are featuring
**Rhododendrons that start with
the letter N.**
Enjoy!

Northern Starburst



November 4 CVRS Meeting Guest Speaker

Dr. Glen Jamieson, Nanaimo Rhodo Society member and Editor of the ARS Journal will be our guest speaker on Wednesday night. Last October he attended the 70th International New Zealand Rhododendron Conference in Dunedin, and travelled to many gardens on the South Island.



Glenfalloch Garden

Along with 32 other ARS members, my wife Dorothy and I attended the 2014 Conference and in my presentation I summarize our travels and describe and show images of some of the amazing gardens we saw. The conference lasted five busy days, but to give us a better feeling of South Island, we spent an additional two weeks travelling around the island, ten days in a camper and the balance staying with the our wonderful hosts, Colin and Noela Knight, in Christchurch, about 361 km (224 miles) north of Dunedin.

What made NZ gardens and landscapes particularly interesting was the mixing in most gardens of native New Zealand plants with temperate rhododendrons (South Island is too cold for vireyas to be outside all year round, so they grow outside only on the North Island) and the perennials and annuals cultivated basically world-wide.

Being spring in October in the Southern Hemisphere, there were flowering cherries, wisteria, rhodos, and many spring flowering bulbs, all candy to a gardener's eyes!

Glen's talk will give those interested in joining the CVRS New Zealand tour planned for October 2016 a taste of this interesting country and its beautiful gardens.

Glen Jamieson has a B.Sc in Agriculture from McGill University and a M.Sc. and Ph.D. in Zoology from UBC. He worked for Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) as a research scientist for 31 years, both in the Maritimes (5 yr) and at the Pacific Biological Station in Nanaimo, BC (26 yr). He retired from DFO in 2008, and became editor of the Journal of the American Rhododendron Society in 2009. He

joined the ARS in 1995, and has explored for plants in Yunnan, China (2005); Borneo (2008); Ecuador and Peru (five trips) and in Sikkim, India (2015). He has travelled extensively and with his wife Dorothy, lives and maintains a garden in Parksville, BC, where he also has an extensive vireya collection. He is a past president of MARS, and is now its VP and program chair.



Dorothy under 'Mrs. W.T. Thistleton-Dyer' at the Dunedin Botanic Garden

Tips for Beginners: A Case for Deadheading Rhodos

Reprinted from the Spring 2000 ARS Journal

In the popular garden magazine, *Gardens West* (July 1990), readers were told that deadheading rhododendrons was unnecessary for good bloom. Mike Trembath from Aldergrove, BC disagreed and responded to the following statement: One dead-head job you do not have to do is removing the spent flowers on the rhododendrons. It is a sticky job and the plants will bloom well the next year even though the plants are not deadheaded. The only time I would do it is on a shrub that was by my front door or any other place where the spent blossoms are an eyesore.

Well, yes...maybe...sometimes...if you're lucky...and have the right varieties. I take exception to such a large generality, and fear it is a mite misleading. Certainly the faded trusses can be unsightly, and certainly some of them rival old fashioned fly paper for stickiness, but you do not deadhead for cosmetic reasons alone.

I have lived with, collected, grown, and looked at rhodies for some thirty years. More important than the resulting improvement in appearance, deadheading prevents seed production and permits the more rapid development of axillary new growth buds.

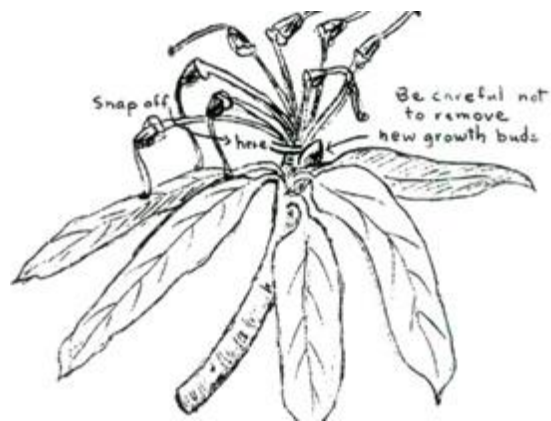
The largesse with which seed is produced by rhododendrons seems to be a varietal pattern, i.e., some produce small, almost non-apparent seed pods; others flaunt great capsules like mini-bananas. Although rhododendron seeds are small, the number of seeds per capsule, or even segment of capsule, is staggering. When you consider that your average garden hybrid carries a truss on every terminal branch (you hope) of eight to twenty flowers each of which may develop a capsule containing millions of

seeds, and when you consider that the production of viable seed is a prime directive for the plant kingdom, you begin to appreciate the demands made on the plant's nutritional system - demands which are more imperative than those for growth and new bud set.



Those varieties prone to set abundant seed show more marked changes: un-deadheaded, the foliage produced is smaller, flower buds are absent or uncharacteristically small, and the branch may even die and be shed. Permitted to continue without deadheading, the entire plant loses vigor and may die. I know there are other factors involved, and seed production is not the sole cause of demise even in my above description, but plants stressed by heavy reproductive duties are ill equipped to withstand other stresses, such as competition or drought.

Individual branches of rhododendrons support a terminal whorl of leaves with a central bud. The bud



may be a flower bud or a leaf bud. In the latter case, spring growth causes the bud to grow - straight ahead, as it were, the branch is lengthened and forms another terminal whorl of leaves and its central bud. If the central bud is a flower bud, growth of the branch occurs from the tiny axillary buds that lie at the junction of the leaf stalks and the main stem. When the spent flower is snapped off, one, or more, of these small buds will lengthen and grow and create the next branch (or branches) with their leaves and terminal buds. If the spent truss is not removed, development of the axillary buds is often delayed. Delayed new growth may fail to produce flower



buds, or may be insufficiently ripe to withstand a hard winter.

The writer of the article is right - you don't have to deadhead your rhodies. However, the job is relaxing in its sheer mindlessness, so if you have the time, and don't mind having the thumb and forefinger of your right hand glued together (I've yet to find a solvent), your plants will be stronger and healthier and will produce more flowers.

Mike Trembath is a member of the Fraser South Chapter.

MEMBERSHIP DEADLINE IS NOW!

November 4 is the deadline to renew your membership and it still costs only \$38. Along with being part of a fun and interesting group of dedicated gardeners and rhodoholics you get the excellent CVRS newsletter, the ARS Journal 4 times per year, great local and international garden tours, access to specialty rhodos, great speakers on a variety of topics and an opportunity to improve your community through new rhodo garden donations. Thanks to everyone who has renewed already!!



Nectarine Group

George Fraser Honoured at Beacon Hill Park, Victoria, BC

Bill Dale

Reprinted from the Spring 2000 ARS Journal



R. cynthia

It has been a long time coming, but George Fraser has finally been recognized for his work in the building of the beautiful Beacon Hill Park in Victoria, British Columbia.

On Saturday, Sept. 25, 1999, a crowd, including many rhododendron enthusiasts, gathered for the unveiling of a commemorative stone to gratefully acknowledge Fraser's contributions as first foreman under landscape architect John Blair, who designed the park.

On Friday night, strong winds had littered the park with broken limbs and split trees, but on Saturday the calm, sun-filled setting by Fountain Lake belied the previous night's tempest, and the ceremony, arranged by Beacon Hill Park's planning manager, Joe Daly, was held in fine weather. Participating in the ceremony were members of the Victoria Scottish Society and Gaelic Choir, Victoria Mayor Bob Cross, Irene Doirin, George Fraser's niece, and Mrs. Marion Crossly, who as a young girl learned to play the violin from Fraser. When the tartan over the stone was removed, Louise Milman, Blair's great-great-granddaughter, placed a sprig of heather by the stone. Contributors to the stone were Scottish groups in Victoria and George Christie's Nursery in Fochabers, Scotland, where a plaque honouring Fraser stands today.

Bill Dale spoke to the gathering about the man who had planted large stands of *Rhododendron* 'Cynthia' in 1889 and many fine specimen trees in the park. In 1889, when John Blair was already recognized as a great landscape designer, he won the competition to design and build Beacon Hill Park. The first thing he did was to hire another Scot, George Fraser, to be his foreman. Blair ordered over 2,000 trees, and Fraser saw to it they were properly planted. George Fraser, al-



A commemorative stone in honor of George Fraser was placed in Beacon Hill Park, Victoria, British Columbia. Photo by Bill Dale

ways modest, and John Blair were probably the two people most responsible for the great parks and gardens in British Columbia and were, indeed, horticultural pioneers.

Fraser had been born and trained in Scotland and while still in his twenties had been head gardener at several large estates in Scotland. Despite his position and reputation, he always wanted to own his own land. As this was not possible in his native Scotland, he struck out for Canada with his dream of owning and operating his own nursery.

After working in Winnipeg and Victoria, he settled in the remote village of Ucluelet on the isolated west coast of Vancouver Island. He formed his "rhododendron heaven" with a climate and soil suitable to grow his beloved rhododendrons and azaleas. He bought 256 acres of land for \$256 in 1894 and cleared enough land for a nursery. He spent the next fifty years doing just what he wanted to do.

Although rhododendrons were always his great love, he had a great interest in developing new plants in other genera. He crossed domestic varieties with the native species of cranberry, gooseberry, rose, and honeysuckle. In 1897, he received a shipment of cranberries from Nova Scotia in which he noticed a weed he recognized as a wild rhododendron from the East Coast - *Rhododendron canadense*. Fifteen years later when it bloomed, in 1912, he promptly crossed it with *R. japonicum*. The cross bloomed in 1919, and later that year a budded plant was sent to Professor C. S. Sargent at the Arnold Arboretum in Massachusetts. When Sargent failed to acknowledge receipt of the plant, Fraser sent another budded plant to William Watson, curator at the Royal Botanic Garden Kew. In 1920, Watson named the hybrid 'Fraseri'. Quite independently, Fraser's hybrid was given the same name at the Arnold Arboretum.

About this time, a young man, Joseph Gable of Stewartstown, Pennsylvania, became interested in growing rhododendrons. The Arnold Arboretum suggested that he get in touch with a Mr. George Fraser

of Ucluelet, B.C. In time, Fraser recommended Gable for membership in the Royal Horticultural Society (something that was required in those days). Fraser also introduced Gable by mail to Mr. E. J. P. Magor of Cornwall. The rest is history as Gable went on to become the dean of all American rhododendron growers. Gable and Fraser became fast friends and corresponded regularly until Fraser's death in 1944. Fraser was buried in the Ucluelet cemetery, and today a plaque donated by members of the local ARS chapters honors him.

Several years later, Gable wrote: "Mr. Fraser helped me very much in my earlier years, and I owe much of what I have been able to accomplish to him. My first hybrids of *R. fortunei*, *R. discolor* and perhaps too of *R. decorum* were obtained through the Magor-Fraser channel and my work has been basically built upon these crosses. So both I and those who grow the varieties of rhododendrons I have concocted and disseminated owe a debt we cannot figure out in dollars and cents to the kindly, paternal advice and generosity of my old friend George Fraser."

In 1991, Fraser was posthumously awarded the rarely given Pioneer Achievement Award by the American Rhododendron Society, and a bronze plaque was placed at both Ucluelet and Scotland in his honour. However, it was not until Sept. 25, 1999, that the city of Victoria honoured this pioneer who had been responsible for planting many of the trees



R. George Fraser

Photo by Bill Dale

and shrubs in Beacon Hill Park over a hundred years ago.

Although George Fraser lived in the remote village Ucluelet on the west coast of Vancouver Island and died in 1944, the year before the American Rhododendron Society was officially formed, he carried on a correspondence with the leading rhododendron growers of the day, both in North American and Britain. The current hybridizers have the advantage of

very complex crosses, but today some of Fraser's crosses are still considered good plants.

One of his hybrids, 'George Fraser', is a cross of the West Coast native *Rhododendron macrophyllum* with the East Coast native *R. maximum*. Fraser received the pollen of *R. maximum* from his good friend Joseph Gable of Stewartstown, Pennsylvania.

Bill Dale

Christmas Is Coming Soon

Get Your Best Rhodo Photos and Christmas Tale Ready!

It's less than a month to our great annual CHRISTMAS party on December 2 at 6 pm

As usual we will be seeking food donations for the Local Food Bank and the Salvation Army will receive the proceeds from our annual gift table.

Don't forget to bring a copy of your best rhodo photo for entry in the photo contest. Everyone also needs to bring 4 quarters for voting. Along with all the quarters that were voted for the best photo we are awarding \$25 to the first choice, \$15 to the second and \$10 to the third.

We will also have the great annual story telling where in a 3 to 4 minute presentation you must use the following 8 words at least once – **CHRISTMAS CHEER – SEX – RHODO – RHODOHOLIC – RED WINE – DUNCAN – JUSTIN TRUDEAU.**

The winners of the story telling will get some great prizes. Start dreaming up your tale!!



Notice of Motion for November 4 CVRS Meeting

Please be advised that the following motion will be presented at this week's general meeting:

"That Elaine Kitchen be nominated and accepted as the CVRS Treasurer effective November 15, 2015 and further that she be added as one of the three signing officers for the CVRS for the Island Savings Credit Union Accounts."

There will also be an opportunity for Nominations from the Floor for the Treasurer's position at the meeting. In addition there will be a Motion to appoint Bill Dumont as a Director at Large of the CVRS.

Rhododendron Species Garden

*Vancouver Island University's Milner Gardens & Woodland in partnership with The District 1
Vancouver Island Chapters of the American Rhododendron Society*



The ground is being prepared...

Vancouver Island University's Milner Gardens & Woodland and The District 1 Vancouver Island chapters of the American Rhododendron Society are excited to be partnering to create a Rhododendron Species Garden in this area over the next few years.

for conservation

Preserving the old growth trees that were left after this area was logged years ago, this garden will highlight the tremendous diversity found within the genus *Rhododendron*, while contributing to the conservation of species threatened by habitat loss in the wild.

for education

Featuring the parent species of many of the heritage hybrid rhododendrons already here, the species garden will show visitors how plants in their home gardens are related to wild species. It will also provide a valuable opportunity for students from Vancouver Island University's Horticulture Technician program to understand how new hybrid species are developed.

for inspiration

Imagine: A world of rhododendrons from the slopes of the Himalayas, the mountains of eastern Europe, and across North America, including species only recently introduced to horticulture, all nestled into this serene woodland setting.

Stay tuned to find out how you can support this new garden.



Normandy



From Hollywood North to Green Acres

At the recent American Iris Society Region 13 Fall meeting held Oct. 1-3, organised by the BC Iris Society Thomas Hobbs, a well-known garden specialist, and owner of Southlands nursery in Vancouver spoke as the guest speaker and also invited attendees for a tour of his new garden and property in south Langley.



Entrance to Hobbs Farm

Thomas and his partner Brent lived for many years in a beautiful Spanish style home in the Arbutus area of Vancouver which they both invested tremendous planning and plants into their amazing garden. Of course it really helps if you own a large and well-known retail plant store. Looking for a change as the couple ages and work becomes less important they made a decision to find a large rural property on the lower mainland and move from Vancouver.

About 6 years ago they found an abandoned farm covering 20 acres in South Langley just north of the US border. It includes a wooded area logged perhaps 100 year ago, the Campbell River and rolling landscapes. The run down property had a heritage barn and two residences and came with a marijuana grow op and squatters who were eventually evicted after some real challenges to the new owners. The empty palette of former farmland has been slowly modified to an impressive plant filled landscape including a new lake fed by an underground spring, vast expanses of lawn, a huge veggie garden with seed origin dahlias, some decent bearded irises and soon to be abandoned daylilies.



Main Residence



Lots of these around

One of the original residences has been redesigned into a very attractive home for Thomas and Brent. An amazing swimming pool has been added along with a big equipment storage building and an attached greenhouse. Brent works full time at the property along with some other occasional help. There are many other projects underway including restoration of the heritage barn and continually adding trees and shrubs to the already attractive site.

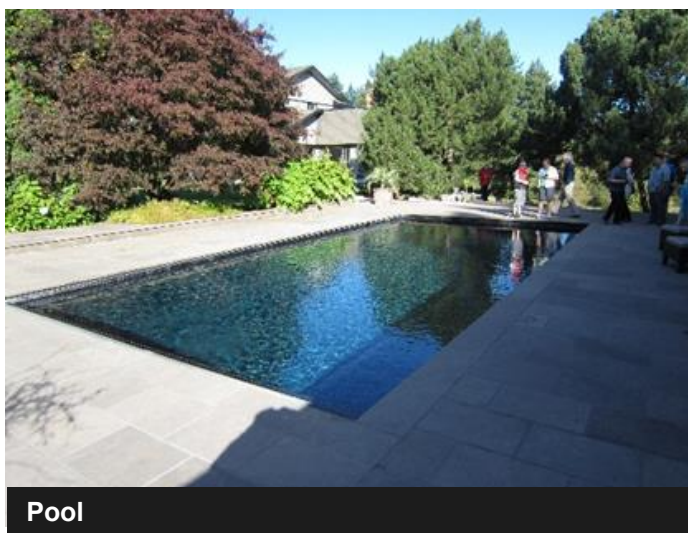
Bill Dumont



Fenced Veggie and Plant Garden



Greenhouse



Pool



Napoli



Nancy Evans

Coming Events-2015/16

November 4, 2015

CVRS Monthly Meeting -The Rhododendron Gardens of New Zealand
Dr. Glen Jamieson on his recent tour of this fascinating southern hemisphere country 7:30 pm
<http://cowichanrhodos.ca/>

December 2, 2015

CVRS Christmas Party—6 pm St. John's Church
Bring a food goodie, a gift and something for the Food Bank.

February 3, 2015

CVRS Monthly Meeting—7:30 pm St. John's Church
Member education event
<http://cowichanrhodos.ca/>

March 2, 2015

CVRS Monthly Meeting - Doug Justice –
UBC- Biodiversity in the Garden

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
www.cowichanrhodos.ca

May 9-11, 2016

CVRS West Coast Tofino Garden Trip

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. 3, 2016

ARS Western Regional Conference
Newport, Oregon

October-November , 2016

CVRS New Zealand Garden Trip

Funding Proposals

The CVRS Executive are reviewing a number of proposals we received from members for funding including propagation facilities, support for students to attend next fall's Regional ARS conference in Newport, Oregon, a new award program for students, and several other ideas. If you have some additional suggestions please let Carrie know.



Nadia

Financial Statement to September 30, 2015

CURRENT ACCOUNT	6083.73
TOUR ACCOUNT	8650.02
BURSARY ACCOUNT	1866.53
TERM DEPOSIT No. 11 – Nov. 2016 – 2.25%	13264.31
ISCU SHARES	<u>5.00</u>
TOTAL Deposits-ISCU – September 30, 2015	\$ 29869.59

W. Dumont Treasurer



Night Music



Noble Mountain



Nancy Evans x Purple Splendour

Favourite Rhodos

Alan Campbell

I imagine that most rhododendron growers have been asked at one time or another, "...what is your favourite rhododendron?" For me this is a difficult question to answer though I'm rather inclined to give the glib response "...the one flowering profusely at the moment". It is much easier for me to say which 'group' of rhododendrons is my favourite, and that would be sub-section triflora.



R. augustinii ssp. augustinii



R. augustinii ssp. chasmanthum

The triflora sub-section contains two dozen or so species and sub-species and being lepidotes will display scales somewhere on their leaves and/or corolla. The most variable species within the sub-section is R. augustinii.

This species, with its four sub-species ssp. augustinii, ssp. chasmanthum, ssp. hardy, and ssp. rubrum, has a large growing range reaching from Tibet into the Provinces of Sichuan and Yunnan or Western China. The variability of the species shows clearly in the wide spectrum of corolla colour, from white, pale pink, deep pink, to a multitude of lavender/violet/blue shades all with varying coloured blotches and spotting.

In our garden, Stonefold, we grow 15 named forms of R. augustinii. These range from the registered forms as in R. augustinii 'Blue Cloud', and R. augustinii 'Whalley' to locally named forms such as Ken Gibson's R. augustinii 'Betty Farmer',

Evelyn Weesjes's R. augustinii 'Deep Blue', and Sue Klapwijk's R. augustinii 'Best in Show'. Now we all know that a true 'Gentian blue' is not available in the genus rhododendron but some come oh so close as seen with R. augustinii 'Cox Form' an almost powder blue or the deep dark violet blue of R. augustinii 'Cerulean Mist'.



R. augustinii ssp. hardy



Blaney's Blue



Crater Lake



Bluenose

Not to be over looked are the hybrids developed from this splendid species, 'Blaney's Blue', 'Crater Lake', 'Bluenose', and 'Jean's Favourite' to name just a few. With the species *R. augustinii* and it's hybrids a flowering time from mid March to early May can be enjoyed.

The growth habit is upright multi-stemmed and branched. The leaves long and narrow with a delicate substance which causes them to shimmer in the slightest breeze giving , to my mine, a lithe delicate feminine tone to the garden. These plants can take full sun and, once established, will tolerate dries conditions. To those gardeners who always have a pair of secateurs in one hand the 'augustinii's' respond well to light or heavy pruning.

A single plant of *R. augustinii* growing in a garden, a focal point, a grouping of different forms growing together, spectacular, a row of plants growing as a 'back of the border', hedge, out standing! No matter what your pleasure, try them, you'll like them.

Alan Campbell



R. augustinii* ssp. *rubrum

Tips for Gardeners

Tired of rescuing bumble bees and hummingbirds from the green house?

Try hanging a bead or string curtain over the doorway. On those hot days when you leave the door open for extra air flow this does the job and protects our insects and birds from being trapped inside.

Sandra Stevenson



Naselle



Nova Sunrise

2015-16 Executive

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Sunshine: Mary Gale

Tea: Judeen Hendricksen

Raffle: Hilda Gerrits

Club Liaison: Alan Campbell

Library: Joyce Rodger

Program Co-ordinator: Sandra Stevenson, Alan Campbell,

History: Ian Efford

Garden Tours: Alan Murray

CV Garden Fair: The Team

Facility Liaison: Roy Elvins

Christmas Party: The Team

Bus Tours: Bill Dumont

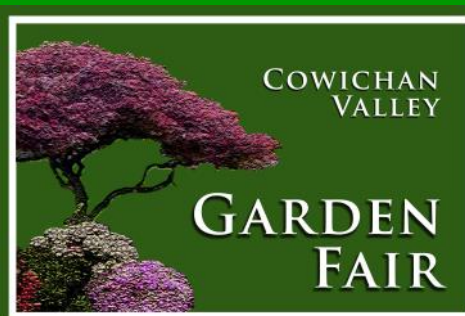
Species Garden Reps: Siggie Kemmler, Alan Campbell



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 April 30, 2016

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

2015 - 2016 Tea Service for Meetings

DATE	TEAM LEADER	MEMBERSHIP LIST (June 2015)
Oct. 7	Joyce Rodger	#50 thru 67 Nelson thru Young
Nov. 4	David Annis	#1 thru 17 Agar thru Dinter
Feb. 3	Judeen Hendrickson	#18 thru 35 Drewcock thru Jacques
Mar. 2	Elaine Kitchen	
Apr. 6	David Annis	
May 4	Joyce Rodger	