



# NEWSLETTER

Volume 17, Number 9

EDITOR: LESLIE DREW

December 2006

## Weather Confuses Rhodo



**T**ricked by abnormal weather, the young 'Fabia' x 'bureavii' cross shown here in the garden of Saggi and Maria Kemmler came into full bloom twice this year. The plant, now 1 m tall, has been with them 7 years, from the one-gallon-pot stage. In the autumn of last year, it was transplanted to a new bed where it receives much more sun than the dappled sunlight it had previously. After flowering for the first time this spring, in late November, before the heavy snowfalls, it came into bloom a second time. ↪



## What's Coming Up

**December Meeting:** Christmas Party, Wednesday, December 6 in St. John's Anglican Church Hall, 486 Jubilee street, Duncan. Set-up starting at 3 PM, arrival by 5 PM, dinner at 6 PM. (See Page 12 for details).

**January Meeting:** January 3 in St. John's Anglican Church Hall. Set-up at 7 PM, meeting starts 7:30.

**Speakers:** Janet Gardner will give a PowerPoint presentation on azaleas and other rhododendrons at the former Myers garden at Honeymoon Bay. Leslie Drew will give a short talk on rhodo record-keeping, old-style.

**Tea and Goodies:** Ruth Cook\*, Dawn Fedorchuk, Sandy and Alan Campbell. \* indicates team leader.

**Directors' Meeting:** Directors will meet by email in December. If anyone has any concerns about Chapter activities, please email your concerns to the Directors.

**Propagating Group Meeting:** No meeting in December.

**Annual Spring Sale:** May 5, 2007.

**ARS Annual Convention:** "Rhododendrons at the Golden Gate", April 12-15, 2007; Embassy Suites Hotel, South San Francisco, California.

*Next meeting to be held January 3, 2007,  
in St. John's Anglican Church Hall,  
486 Jubilee Street, Duncan*

*The Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society*

A Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society

PO Box 904, Duncan, BC V9L 3Y2 <http://cowichan.rhodos.ca>



## President's Message

At year's end, I'd like to celebrate several accomplishments resulting from the diligent work of our directors and other members.

- Our Propagation Group undertook several major projects.
- Ian Efford's proposal that our Chapter merited a stronger public presence resulted in the first-ever gift of plants to Malaspina University/College in Duncan.
- Although the annual Spring Plant Sale did not attract as many customers as previously, next year the Exhibition Grounds are being considered to provide more space for vendors and customer parking, plus greater visibility.
- At Lake Cowichan, our Chapter supported the town's Communities in Bloom project of a memorial rhododendron garden. This garden, planted with species and Vancouver Island-bred hybrids, will commemorate two Marble Bay couples, Dr. Richard Stoker and his wife Susan, and their successors, Suzanne and Buchanan Simpson, whose nursery became the basis for the Royston Nursery of Mary and Ted Greig, more or less the beginning of substantial rhododendron breeding on Vancouver Island. It is hoped that the garden, to be maintained in perpetuity by the municipality, will attract rhodo enthusiasts from around the world.

The town has appointed me chair of the project, and I will keep you informed about its progress.

- I was also asked to advise the present owners of the former Cedric and Gertrude Myers garden at Honymoon Bay in their restoration efforts, and found enthusiastic support from our Propagation Group here as well. At our January meeting, Janet Gardner will give us an overview of how well azaleas and other rhodos can survive over 20 years of neglect. We hope to identify some of the plants through excellent digital photos of the blossoms taken by Janet and Ian Efford.

This coming year will see exciting programs and outstanding speakers in part due to the club's purchase of a projector for PowerPoint presentations. We hope to invite the public to some of the more interesting programs to recoup part of the cost. We are fortunate in having an influx of newcomers to the Valley, some of whom have chosen to join and take a much-appreciated part in club activities. We have also strengthened our ties with the ARS, which will only benefit us in the future.

As we look forward to a splendid Christmas party, best wishes for a productive and Happy New Year, and my heartfelt thanks to all of you.

by Ingeborg Woodsworth

## From the minutes . . .

Extracts from the minutes of the annual general meeting of the Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society held November 1 in St. John's Anglican Church hall, Duncan:

**Election:** Election of board members for 2007 took place. Nominees were presented from the nominating committee and there were no further nominations from the floor. Those who will serve in 2007 are: Ingeborg Woodsworth, President; Ian Efford, First Vice-President; Janet Gardner, Second Vice-President; Sharon Tillie, Secretary; Siggie Kemmler, Treasurer; Leslie Drew, Newsletter Editor; and Directors Roger and Anne Slaby, and Jackie Walker, completing 2-year terms; Leslie Bundon and Bill Dumont, starting 2-year terms; and Alan Campbell, Ex-Officio Board Member.

**Purchase:** Purchase of a high-lumen PowerPoint projector, recommended by the Board, was approved unanimously.

**Fundraiser:** The President reported that copies of the book *Rhododendrons on a Western Shore* donated to the

club by Dave Dougan, will be sold in 2007. The suggested price was \$12.



Extracts from the November 22 meeting of directors at the home of Ian Efford, Crofton:

**Bursary:** The President reported that Malaspina University/College at Nanaimo had inquired about the CVRS bursary. This will again be made available to an eligible student planning a career in horticulture who is a resident of the Cowichan Valley.

**Speakers' Fees:** New honoraria for speakers were discussed after the President noted that the Nanaimo Chapter pays Island speakers \$50 plus mileage. The CVRS at present pays a flat \$125. Under a new schedule approved by the directors, club members will not receive remuneration, Island speakers will be paid \$75, speakers from the Lower Mainland \$125, and the honorarium for exceptional speakers will be at the Board's discretion. Occasional cost-sharing with other chapters will be discussed next year.



## THE QUESTION BOX

### Brown Leaves

by Norman Todd

**Q** What causes the leaves on my rhododendron to have brown tips?" asks a distressed gardener.

**A** The questioner should not feel especially concerned, as this is a common complaint; it is not often a life-threatening condition.

There are four main causes for plants having brown tips to their leaves: (1) lack of water at the roots, (2) sun burn, (3) fertilizer burn, and (4) frozen tissue.

The first is the most likely. Rhododendrons need 25 mm of water per week in spring, summer, and fall. To check whether a plant has adequate root moisture, dig down just outside the drip line to a depth of 25 cm; the soil should be moist for the complete depth of the hole. When using automated irrigation, it is a good idea to place tin cans in the irrigated area and measure the amount of water being dispersed. It should accumulate to about 25 mm over a week. Some allowance should be made for evaporation from the container.

Other rhododendrons show their thirst by curling their leaves. They do this to reduce the area of the exposed underside of the leaf where the transpiration of water takes place. Others do not. I think it is fair to say that the ones that do not curl their leaves come from very moist summer climates where they have no need for this defensive strategy.

Some rhododendrons are just unable to pump enough water to keep their leaves turgid. The old saw that says "the bigger the leaf, the more the shade" is something that every grower should keep in mind. After all, the reason a plant has big leaves is so that it can catch every photon of light and keep up its productivity.

My experience is that many yellow-flowered rhododendrons do not like the hot afternoon summer sun. Paul Wurz, who recently spoke to our clubs, mentioned that he found several of the yellow-flowered plants did well when given a lot of light. Further, if that situation had really good air movement, the plant was not as liable to become infected with powdery mildew. The lesson we can take from this is that rhododendrons should be sited to receive as much light as possible and we should not be slow about moving them around—they are very portable. More light also gives a heavier bud set.

Rhododendrons are not begonias; they are not gross feeders; however, they do like a constant supply of nourishment. Slow release fertilizers are safest. The general fertilizer that I use most frequently is 10–8–6. This is coated with a resin so it releases its nutrients slowly. The resin dissolves more rapidly with warmer soil temperatures, but this is a good arrangement as the plants' need for food doubles with every 10°C rise in temperature. I did hear of a very unhappy outcome when using a 10–8–6 fertilizer that was coated with an inferior resin that had no lasting effect at all. The plants Oded and their leaves went brown at the edges.

The amount of antifreeze that a rhododendron has in its system varies with the variety. Leaf tissue can suffer cell damage from becoming frozen. Many of us remember February 1989. January had been fairly mild and the sap was running in many plants. At our place (near Elk Lake outside Victoria) the temperature went down to about –9°C with a strong northeast wind. Some foliage was desiccated and froze. The big leaf species such as *macabeanum* had lots of brown edges. Some of the even more tender ones just gave up the ghost.

The moral in all of this is just don't be too blue about the odd brown leaf. With a little thought and effort most browning can be prevented. 



## A New Island Hybrid

A new late-flowering rhododendron hybrid from Vancouver Island has been named for British Columbia's Lieutenant-Governor Iona Campagnolo.

*Rhododendron* 'Iona Cee'—a cross of 'Haida Gold' (*wardii* × 'Goldfort') and 'Golden Star' (*fortunei* ssp. *fortunei*) × *wardii* var. *wardii*)—is a yellow rhodo created by Harry Wright, well-known Courtenay rhodo nurseryman and speaker who is District Director for the nine chapters of the American Rhododendron Society in British Columbia.

The plant was named and registered by Bill Dale, who says the lieutenant-governor has been a strong supporter of efforts to commemorate Ucluelet's George Fraser, pioneer nurseryman and rhodo hybridizer. He hopes to get a plant to take next spring to Fraser Days, which he established. The name Iona Cee was chosen because Iona by itself had already been taken.

R. 'Iona Cee' is smaller than its familiar parent 'Haida Gold', Bob Rhodes' selected seedling from an American nursery's seed batch which has been much propagated by Harry Wright and the hybrid for which his nursery is named, and is a sister seedling of Wright's 'Courtenay Queen' and 'Courtenay Princess'.



R. 'Iona Cee' flowers in mid-June

Harry made the cross in 1991 and the resulting plant flowered for the first time in 1997. "For my records, I have always called it 'Mid June' because that is when she blooms," he says. "She's very similar to 'Haida Gold' except she blooms one month later. When Bill requested a plant, that is the one I selected. It will be a few years before I will have cuttings."

With the richly scented species *fortunei* in its background, 'Iona Cee' might be expected to carry genes for fragrance. "I haven't really put her to the test," Harry says, "but I will next year." 

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## New Members

A hearty welcome to our new members Judeen Hendrickson, Carrie and Richard Nelson, and Susan O'Connor.

Judeen Hendrickson hails from Edmonton, where she had spent most of her life. Now, retired and living in Cowichan Bay, having a fair-sized yard, and keen on taking up gardening in a mild climate, she wants to know more about rhododendrons. She has some already and it was while moving them that she thought about the Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society. "I can only learn," says Judeen. Incidentally, she likes the new trial format for general meetings—the main speaker starting the program.

Carrie and Richard Nelson have 10 acres on Baldy Mountain Road, Shawnigan, and have raised their two children, Eric (25) and April (22) on Baldy Mountain since 1981. Richard is an employee of the Cowichan School District, works on behalf of the teachers as

president of their Association, and loves gardening, woodwork, and cooking. Carrie, currently on leave from her position of principal of Malaspina University/College's Cowichan campus at Duncan, is an avid gardener, following in the footsteps of her parents and in-laws. She has just finished building a greenhouse, and looks forward to starting plants from seeds and cuttings. "I'm particularly interested in late-blooming perennials, species rhodos, and propagating *Loderis*," she says. "My longer-term goal is to establish a small nursery to sell perennials, shrubs, and Christmas trees."

Susan O'Connor moved to the Valley 3 years ago from Victoria, has lived in various parts of the Island, and wants to learn about rhodos and companion plants. A gardener since age 20, she finds from experience that there's much to learn about local growing conditions—"finding out what works here." 



## VANCOUVER ISLAND HYBRIDS—PART 6

### Three Victoria Contributors

by Alan Campbell

The Victoria Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society came into being in 1980 through the desire and need seen by notables such as Fred Collins, Bill Dale, and Norman Todd. The Victoria Rhododendron Society was by no means the first horticultural society to be chartered in the Garden City, but becoming the new kid on the block was not a detriment. Membership swelled in this genus-exclusive society, drawing gardeners from throughout Victoria and southern Vancouver Island. Among those filling chair seats at those early Chapter meetings were leaders, if not legends, of the local horticultural scene. Three men, highly educated and of diverse backgrounds, would come to touch the rhododendron gardens and gardeners of Victoria.

#### Albert de Mezey (1903–2005)

Albert de Mezey was born in Hungary to an upper-class family, which assured him of a classical education and paved his way into his chosen field of engineering. Forced out of his home and country after his father's death and political upheaval in central Europe, he and his sister Mary, along with their mother, found their way to the Canadian Prairies in 1928. The Dirty Thirties notwithstanding, Albert de Mezey continued his education into university, obtaining a firm grasp of engineering principles, which would hold him in good stead as boom times developed with the Second World War.

The de Mezeys found their way to Victoria in 1946, and Albert quickly became infatuated with the native flora of Vancouver Island. His membership in the Vancouver Island Rock and Alpine Garden Society undoubtedly found him scrambling over the scree of the central highlands of the Island. Now, we all know how to identify a rock and alpine gardener, don't we? Their noses to the ground and posterior regions catching the sun. It is with this picture in mind that I put into words a vision of mine. It isn't documented anywhere, but I can picture Albert de Mezey and Ted Greig scrambling over the moraines of Forbidden Plateau and bumping heads over a rare specimen of *Saxifrage lyallii*. I know it just had to have happened that way.

The de Mezey home in Victoria was a Samuel Maclure mansion built in the Fairfield district, and the garden



Albert de Mezey often used *R. williamsianum*  
[Chris Klapwijk photo]

quickly became a mecca for garden enthusiasts. Albert's interest in hybridizing and his generosity would see his work flow out to the gardens of neighbors and friends. Should he become especially enamored of someone he would name one of his hybrids for that person. Some of his known hybrids are 'Jean Todd' (*R. williamsianum* × *R. gymnocarpum*) (not registered) and 'Shirley Smith', of unknown parentage and again not registered. One very familiar hybrid on the Island is known as 'Mary's Favourite', named for Albert's sister, but when Herman Vaartnou attempted to register the plant it was found that the name had already been taken, so it was renamed and registered in 1989 as 'Mary de Mezey' (*R. williamsianum* × *R. wardii*). A second plant of the same cross which is seen in some gardens is 'Mary's Favourite Sister' (not reg.). The plant 'Albert de Mezey' (not reg.) is another *R. williamsianum* cross. Yet another of his crosses is named for Princess Abkhazi, also of Victoria garden fame—'Peggy Abkhazi' ('Penjerrick' × 'Aurora') (reg. 1989 by Bill Dale).

In his often-published article "The Birds and the Bees" Norman Todd tells of being told by Albert de Mezey that "to grow rhododendrons one needs a physical age of 30 and a longevity of 300." This indicates to me that he realized the effort, dedication, and deliberation needed to grow rhododendrons well. On the other hand, another well-known member of the Victoria Chapter states "... Another problem that comes out with Albert de Mezey's plants is that he used the same (unregistered) name for all the seedlings from a cross—you have almost no idea what the plant will look like! Worse, there are so few records you might

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### Three Victoria Contributors

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not even know what rhodos are crossed. It's a shame." Did a man so educated, such an astute businessman, an engineer, all aspects which demand precise record-keeping, become so lax when it came to his hybridizing hobby? Apparently so. Of course records can be lost or misplaced. Are there more de Mezey hybrids hidden in Victoria gardens? I like to think so, but for now we can enjoy and purposefully preserve those plants he has left us.

#### Herman Vaartnou (1917–1996)

Dr. Herman Vaartnou was also a charter member of the Victoria Rhododendron Society. He was born in Estonia, and managed to escape to Sweden as the Russian army overran his country during the Second World War. In Sweden he marked up two achievements: he gained a bachelor of science degree in agriculture, and he married Hella, also an expatriate of Estonia.

In early 1950, the Vaartnouns emigrated to Canada and settled in Vancouver where Herman entered the agronomy department at the University of British Columbia as a laboratory assistant under the eye of Dr. Vernon Brink. At the same time, he undertook the added task of upgrading to a master of science in agriculture. Upon attaining that degree, he then took on the position of Supervisor of Grounds in the Department of Physical Plants at UBC which he held until 1966, during which time he also obtained his PhD in plant ecology and taxonomy.



Herman Vaartnou crosses included *R. irroratum*  
[Chris Klapwijk photo]

It was during his tenure as grounds supervisor that his interest in rhododendrons took root. Late 1964 saw the initial steps taken by Dr. Milton Walker of the newly formed Rhododendron Species Foundation and Mary Greig of the Royston Nurseries to bring in rhododendron species plant material from Britain to UBC for propagation. Herman was immediately taken with the project and enlisted the aid of his promising new propagator, Evelyn Jack (Weesjes), to begin the conversion of seed and cuttings into garden-worthy plants. At this time, Dr. Vaartnou began his own collection of species *Rhododendra* by procuring propagated material coming out of Brodick Castle in Scotland to UBC as well as chosen Greig forms of species from the Royston nursery. See how the various threads of the local rhododendron community are starting to form a tighter weave?

Herman and Hella moved to their Lansdowne Road property in Victoria in 1976 and immediately began what was to become one of the noted gardens of Victoria for its large collection of big-leaved rhododendrons. In time, Herman became involved with the newly formed Victoria Rhododendron Society as well as the Friends of the University of Victoria's Finnerty Garden.

Herman selected, named, and registered many good forms of rhododendrons from his collection as well as those in the university gardens, though it is not always clear if those chosen were Greig-selected forms, his own selected forms from Brodick, or open-pollinated plants from his own garden. Two Greig-selected plants that he named and registered were 'Chancellors Choice' (reg. 1990), a form of *R. pseudochrysanthum*, and 'Toni James' (reg. 1994), a form of *R. williamsianum* (a mix-up at registration misspelled Tony as Toni). Some of those plants coming out of Britain that Dr. Vaartnou named and registered are: 'Peeter's Pride' (reg. 1989), a form of *R. montroseanum* (and yes, Peeter is spelled correctly); 'Mother Julia' (reg. 1989), a selection of *R. varicose*; 'Manivalde' (reg. 1989), a selection of *R. praestans*; and 'Dr. Brian Saunders' (reg. 1994), a form of *R. calophytum*. Still more of his registered plants were of selected seedlings from open-pollinated seed or, as Clint Smith calls them, "bumble bee hybrids." Open-pollinated means that the pollen parent is unknown. 'Linda Marie' (reg. 1989) is from o.p. seed of *R. irroratum*. 'Erik's Choice' (reg. 1989) is from o.p. seed of *R. grande*. Of course, we are all familiar with 'Prince Abkhazi' and 'Princess Abkhazi', both of which are from o.p. seed of *R. irroratum* (reg. 1989). The two named plants from o.p. seed of *R. soulei* are

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### Three Victoria Contributors

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'Finnerty' (reg. 1993) and 'Mrs. Dora Kreiss' (reg. 1995). Are they related? We don't know. Two o.p. *R. macabeaenum* seedlings were also registered, 'Mrs. Margaret Buffam' (reg. 1995) and 'Norman Todd' (reg. 1994). The same question: are they from the same seed pod or do they have different pollen parents? Again, we don't know.

I do not want to appear to be trivializing or holding with less regard the contributions of Dr. Vaartnou because they are not the result of focussed hybridizing goals, but I would like to make a point or two. I've been told that he named and (or) registered in excess of 50 plants, but lists held by Evelyn Weesjes and the Victoria Chapter count only 36. What plants are missing? We don't know. The documentation just isn't there and, as shown in the preceding paragraph, documentation is incomplete for many of the plants we do know of. My second point concerns those 14 or so plants missing from the lists. Do they still exist in some secluded part of someone's garden or, as in the case of the *R. macabeaenum* hybrid 'Norman Todd', have they disappeared? The registered hybrid 'Norman Todd' died out in the Vaartnou garden and the name can never be used again in the rhododendron registry. If a hybridizer believes that a plant is worthy of naming and registering, then it must be propagated and planted out in various gardens to safeguard its existence. All that being said, I still feel that should someone have the space and decide to amass all the known Vaartnou plants, that collection would be a fantastic sight to see.

### Stuart Holland (1910–1989)

Interest in rhododendrons blossomed in Victoria long before the start of the Victoria Rhododendron Society. During the early 1950s, Dr. Stuart Holland began to establish the garden of his Transit Road property in Oak Bay. Born in British Columbia and brought up here, Stuart Holland followed his interest in geology to UBC, received his bachelor's and master's degrees, and continued on to a PhD from Princeton University. His expertise in geology would see him become the chief geologist for the mines ministry in his home province.

In performing his duties as chief geologist, he travelled the length and breadth of the province, from seashores to alpine meadows and with his inquiring mind developed a fascination for the diverse flora he came upon. Through his



Stuart Holland chose *R. cinnabarinum Roylei* group for two of his three known crosses  
[Mike Trembath photo]

interest in botany, he became acquainted with Dr. Adam Szczawinski, curator of botany at the Provincial Museum during the 1950s, and the two of them, along with eight other gardening enthusiasts around Victoria, organized The Arboretum Society of the Pacific Northwest. The purpose was to establish a national arboretum within Victoria, beginning with a specialized rhododendron garden. Federal politics being as fickle as it is, these plans were stifled within their fledgling steps. Undeterred, the Arboretum Society scaled back their plans and with donations from area nursery operators such as Ed Lohbrunner, Richard Layritz, and Ted and Mary Greig, the planting of Playfair Park in Saanich began.

Stuart Holland's interest in rhododendrons was second to none, and naturally led to attempts at hybridizing. He dabbled in the Triflora subsection with *R. augustinii* and also did some work with *R. thomsonii*. No record of the hybrids produced from this work seems to exist, but his work with the subsection Cinnabarina is where he really excelled. Bill Dale gives high praise indeed when he speaks of his best friend as being "the best rhodo man I have known." The Victoria Chapter has chosen to make one of Stuart Holland's *R. cinnabarinum* crosses as their marquee plant. This hybrid is 'Transit Gold' {'Royal Flush' (cream form) × *R. cinnabarinum* ssp. *xanthocodon*} (reg. 1990). Stuart Holland died early in 1989, but Bill Dale saw to the registration of his finest work. The hybrid 'Stuart Holland', an open-pollinated hybrid of *R. cinnabarinum* Roylei group was registered in 1993, but it is not clear in the registration

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## December in the Garden

by Liz and Allan Murray

December is generally a quiet month in the rhododendron garden, but a few things can be done. When weather permits, a walk around the rhodo plantings can be very pleasant and informative, helping one make decisions for the coming year.

Planting can continue as long as the ground is not frozen. Although roots form in the colder months, the top of the plant remains relatively dormant, giving plants a little more time to settle and establish. A rhododendron is much safer in the ground than waiting, unplanted, in a pot.

Water is usually not a problem in this weather. But is it? Rhodos do not do well standing in water so if you notice a plant in this situation, try to find a way to drain it. Or perhaps this is the time to lift the plant, raise the area, and replant.

Dead branches can be pruned at this time, as can unwanted branches. Remember that you will be removing buds, so you may want to wait until they

bloom and then prune. Unwanted branches pruned at this time can be used for winter arranging in the house—they make lovely decorations. Some plants are semi-deciduous or deciduous, and these will have dropped leaves. It seems shocking if you think all rhodos are evergreen, so don't pull them out or prune these plants back. Branches of 'Christmas Cheer' and 'Rosamundi' can be brought in and forced for the Christmas table.

Freezing temperatures will have many of our rhododendrons rolling up their leaves, looking like cigars hanging from the branches. Not to worry; as the weather warms up these unfurl and look great again. This is the plant's way of protecting itself from the cold.

The great thing about December is watching the buds in anticipation of spring, and reading more about rhodos. Don't forget to leave lots of hints about the gifts you would like to receive—tools, tags, books (*Greer's Guidebook to Available Rhododendrons*), and other treasures.

*Have a wonderful December and Merry Christmas to all! ☺*

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### Three Victoria Contributors

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declaration in the Journal of the ARS whether this is a Holland cross or a Vaartnou cross. Bill Dale is adamant that the hybrid was a plant selected by Stuart Holland from his garden, which was registered by Herman Vaartnou in Holland's memory. The only other hybrid that has been found, to my knowledge, and attributed to Holland is growing in Peter Kearns's garden at Cowichan Bay. This unnamed hybrid is a cross of *R. cinnabarinum* Roylei group and 'Lady Chamberlain'. Only three hybrids known of one man's work! Are there more? I have heard of cuttings taken from the old Transit Road garden by a member of the Victoria Rhododendron Society but have yet to confirm this.

Stuart Holland's memory will endure not only because of the Victoria club's choice of 'Transit Gold' as its emblem, but also because of Saanich

municipality immortalizing the names of the original members of the Arboretum Society on a bronze plaque in Playfair Park.

I grow and propagate the plants of these three gentlemen, but unfortunately never had the opportunity to meet them, but I do know those they mentored and who have taught me in turn. In that, I hold them in gratitude. Dr. Holland I hold in special reverence in the expectation that, should I ever enter the realm of the hybridizer, I too will work with the subsections Cinnabarina and Triflora. ☺

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## Editor's Notebook

by Leslie Drew

A well-established organization like the American Rhododendron Society—more than 4200 members and 60 years of effort by countless people—has resources that few of us know exist. This was brought home to us when Jim Crawford spoke at our November meeting.

Jim is a member of the Western North America Rhododendron Species Project, an offshoot of the Rhododendron Species Foundation. The title sounds less than exciting, but we were treated to the most riveting presentation I've ever heard and seen on our native rhododendrons *R. macrophyllum* and *R. albiflorum*, plus the ledums (Labrador tea) now classified as rhodos.

The project seeks to accurately map native rhododendron occurrences from the Aleutians to southern California. Jim joined the already well-founded organization back in 1995, and was assigned to do the British Columbia mapping as the lone Canadian representative (he is a third-generation Salt Spring Islander, by the way). As a geologist, he was familiar with the new technology for precise geographic location anywhere on the planet—the satellite-dependent Global Positioning System. He knew that this new tool, which could pinpoint mineral outcrops, was equally useful for precisely mapping patches of plants, even single plants, however remote, once they had been found by ground or aerial sightings.

During 20 summers on mineral exploration programs in the Arctic, Jim developed a keen interest in wildflowers and nature photography, and became a skilled cameraman. He has taught technical drawing and studied botanical illustrating. He is also, of course, a resolute hiker, undeterred by rugged terrain or freakish weather in the search of a certain plant, say, and willing to return if the time is not right.

So what we saw at our meeting was a succession of dramatic photos of *R. macrophyllum* blossoms in full glory in the Pacific Northwest. Of special interest were the stands at Rhododendron Lake up-Island,



Bursts of pink on a clear-cut hillside  
[Jim Crawford photo]

where the plants grow in a peat bog, and the so-called Shawnigan stand at the headwaters of the San Juan and Koksilah rivers, difficult to reach now, where the plants seem bloom well over long, hot summers and where the flowers are supposed to be darker than those at Rhododendron Lake. *R. macrophyllum* has diversified in its estimated 50 million years of evolution in the Northwest, settling into pockets of what genetic researchers call “clades.” In one of the most remarkable photos, we saw a sweeping array of pink bursts of *R. macrophyllum* covering a clear-cut slope of Mount Townsend on the Olympic Peninsula, showing, as Jim said, that this region has exhilarating scenes of rhododendrons to match those of the Himalayas.

Even *R. albiflorum*, “not a very distinguished plant,” looked beautiful, both in close-up blossom at an elevation of 1000 m on Mount Brenton, just behind Crofton, and massed in autumn-yellow leaf on Mount Washington.

This was a slide presentation, given at the same meeting where the CVRS decided to buy PowerPoint projection equipment, which many speakers now request. Several experts say one is not necessarily better than the other. Everything depends on the camera and the eye of the camera operator. It's easy to believe that now.

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### Ah, c'est incredible!

Our member Peter Lewis, a frequent traveller, writes:

*This summer my wife and I were in Paris, along with thousands of other holiday makers. One evening we found ourselves on the Rue Mouffetard in the 5th Arrondissement, home to Verlaine and other notables. It was suppertime, and we decided on Indian food. Seated next to us was a French couple who exchanged friendly glances our way—Georges Tal, an architect, and his wife Jackie Fournier. After we had eaten, they invited us to join them at their Paris flat for a nightcap.*

*As we were walking to their place, they mentioned that they lived in Ernest Hemingway's house, and when we got there a large bronze plaque above the doorway validated their claim. We approached the staircase and were met by a large brass bollard tarnished and worn by the many hands of faithful devotees of the writer. As we climbed further we could almost smell the words of A Moveable Feast.*

*Once inside the large, spacious room we chatted over espresso and cognac, and Jackie mentioned that they had been to Canada 15 years ago. They remembered visiting a large island, and they described a garden they had visited near the sea-side—it had two driveways, was on a steep promontory, and was covered with rhododendrons.*

*At this point in the conversation I hurriedly jumped in and said: "You were in Tofino on Vancouver Island in the garden of my friends, Ken and Dot Gibson."*

*Georges and Jackie had been so inspired by what they had seen that on returning to France, they planted a rhododendron garden at their main dwelling near Mont Blanc and have been avid rhodo gardeners ever since.*

*The next day in Paris I bought a postcard and told Ken and Dot that we had been discussing his*

*garden in Ernest Hemingway's living-room in Paris. I didn't have the correct address, but sent the card to:*

*THE GIBSONS  
Rhodoland  
Tofino*

*And yes, it did arrive. *

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## Tea and Goodies Teams—2007

- JANUARY:** Ruth Cook\* (748-8293), Dawn Fedorchuk (715-1233), Sandy and Alan Campbell (743-3597)
- FEBRUARY:** Sharon Pettersson\* (743-0787), Mona Kaiser and Tom Rimmer (715-1814), Janice Graham-Andrews (246-5420)
- MARCH:** Hugh and Fiona Lawrence\* (743-7808), Jackie Walker (743-3650), Susan O'Connor (746-8695)
- APRIL:** Janet and David Gardner\* (748-1867), Rose Rogan (748-0098), Leslie Bundon (748-9219)
- MAY:** Peter Kearns\* (746-5782), John and Mary Hardy (701-0447), Judeen Hendrickson (748-8856)
- SEPTEMBER:** David Annis\* (748-1338), Doris and Ian Anderson (746-8678), Ruth and Michael Ker (748-7791)
- OCTOBER:** Cindy and James Little\* (743-6777), Liz and Allan Murray (743-9190), Peter Lewis (746-7000)
- NOVEMBER:** Anne and Roger Slaby\* (748-4623), Don and Hilda Gerrits (701-0755), Marie Jacques (743-5021)

\* Indicates team leader.

- Please let your team leader and Maria know if you can't come to a meeting.
- The team leader will bring a half litre of milk.
- The team under each month's heading will supply goodies, set up and make tea and coffee; it is also responsible for the kitchen clean-up after the meeting. The teams should be at the hall by 7:15 PM.
- Maria will look after the kitchen supplies; if anything is needed or if there are questions or problems, please call her at 746-8751. She will also call to remind you the day before the meeting.



## **Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society 2007 Membership List**

<b>Status*</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Address</b>
1 I	Ian and Doris Anderson	746-8678	1365 Donnay Drive, Duncan V9L 5R9
2 I	David Annis	748-1338	#19-5980 Jaynes Road, Duncan V9L 4X6
3 I	Leslie Bundon	748-9219	2267 Davis Crescent, Duncan V9L 4L8
4 I	Alan Campbell	743-3597	1995 Shawnigan Lake Road, Shawnigan Lake V0R 2W0
5 I	Sandy Campbell	743-3597	1995 Shawnigan Lake Road, Shawnigan Lake V0R 2W0
6 I	Etta and Ruth Cook	748-8293	3996 Riverside Road, Duncan V9L 6N1
7 L	Jim Crawford	537-9941	PO Box 480, Salt Spring Island V8K 2W1
8 I	Bill Dale	656-6888	106-2286 Henry Avenue, Sidney V8L 2B2
9 A	Leslie Drew	748-6152	4491 Creighton Road, Duncan V9L 6J7
10 I	Bill Dumont	743-9882	1753 Peerless Road, Cobble Hill V0R 1L0
11 I	Ian Efford	246-1453	PO Box 131, 1435 Georgia Park Heights, Crofton V0R 1R0
12 I	Roy and Gloria Elvins	746-7526	1027 Islay Street, Duncan V9L 2E2
13 I	Dawn Fedorchuk	715-1233	7565 Rosevear Road, Duncan V9L 5Z8
14 I	Mary Gale	743-9329	2895 Church Way, Mill Bay V0R 2P2
15 I	Joyce Gammie	246-2484	10101 View Street, Chemainus V0R 1K2
16 I	David and Janet Gardner	748-1867	1228 Margaret Place, Duncan V9L 5R6
17 I	Don and Hilda Gerrits	701-0755	6042 McNeil Road, Duncan V9L 2H9
18 I	Janice Graham-Andrews	246-5420	10543 Victoria Road, Chemainus V0R 1K2
19 I	John and Mary Hardy	701-0447	4820 Hillbank Road, Cowichan Bay V0R 1N1
20 I	Judeen Hendrickson	748-8856	1765 Pritchard Road, Cowichan Bay V0R 1N1
21 I	Daphne Jackson	743-5632	100 Marine Drive, Cobble Hill V0R 1L1
22 I	Marie Jacques	743-5021	PO Box 65, Cobble Hill V0R 1L0
23 I	Mona and Tom Kaiser / Rimmer	715-1814	6181 Grieve Road, Duncan V9L 2G9
24 I	Peter Kearns	746-5782	2130 Cowichan Bay Road, Cowichan Bay V0R 1N1
25 I	Siggi and Maria Kemmler	746-8751	3730 Gibbins Road, Duncan V9L 6E7
26 I	Michael and Ruth Ker	748-7791	4310 Sunrise Road, Duncan V9L 6E7
27 I	Michael and Sheryl Krieger	391-6225	PO Box 19, Malahat V0R 2L0
28 I	Hugh and Fiona Lawrence	743-7808	2635 Partridge Road, Mill Bay V0R 2P1
29 I	Peter Lewis	746-7000	2580 Riverfield Road, Duncan V9L 6N2
30 I	James and Cindy Little	743-6777	2366 Losee Road, Shawnigan Lake V0R 2W0
31 I	Allan and Liz Murray	743-9190	1951 Doran Road, RR#1, Cobble Hill V0R 1L5
32 I	Carrie and Richard Nelson	743-3679	1720 Baldy Mountain Road, Shawnigan Lake V0R 2W2
33 I	Susan O'Connor	746-8695	1066 Herd Road, Duncan V9L 5W9
34 I	Sharon Pettersson	743-0787	1520 Robson Lane, Cowichan Bay V0R 1N1
35 I	Rose Rogan	748-0098	5005 Jordans Lane, Duncan V9L 6J1
36 I	Roger Slaby	748-4623	1264 Cherry Point Road, RR#3, Cowichan Bay V0R 1N2
37 I	Anne Slaby	748-4623	1264 Cherry Point Road, RR#3, Cowichan Bay V0R 1N2
38 I	Ann Springford	746-7303	Box 25, 6510 Birdseye Drive, Duncan V9L 5Y2
39 I	Sharon Tillie	748-8254	4372 Sunrise Road, Duncan V9L 6G6
40 I	Jackie Walker	743-3650	1780 Baldy Mountain Road, Shawnigan Lake V0R 2W2
41 I	Ingeborg Woodsworth	749-6291	PO Box 351, 6596 McLean Road, Lake Cowichan V0R 2G0
42 I	June Wynne	743-5199	2639 Mill Bay Road, Mill Bay V0R 2P1

\*A = associate membership; I = individual membership; L= life membership



## CVRS Christmas Party

**Wednesday, December 6 at 5 PM in St. John's Anglican Church Hall**

Appreciation Night – Recognition of Stan and Nyra Groves and Fred Collins

**What To Bring:** Potluck contribution plus dinner plate, dessert plate, cutlery, glass for wine or punch, and cup or mug for tea or coffee; garden-related item for the silent auction, \$5 admission and money for auction tickets.

Please place potluck contributions in designated rooms on either side of the hall. Auction items\* go on the long centre table. Choose your seating and arrange place settings, pour some wine or non-alcohol punch, and have some appetizers.

**6:00 PM:** Self-serve dinner begins.

**6:30 PM:** Program begins with David Annis as Master of Ceremonies and Mary Gale assisting. Welcome from the President, Ingeborg Woodsworth; Toasts to the guests of honor—and roasts; Identify the Rhododendron Contest conducted by Daphne Jackson, the auction, and presentation of the club's Silver Bowl.

\* **The auction works this way:** We each bring a garden-related item, not gift wrapped, value \$10–15 for the long centre table. Beside each item is a small plastic plant pot. You go around, see what you'd like to win, and place a ticket (or more if you wish) in the pot beside the item. A draw takes place from the tickets for each item, and each winner is announced. Attendants will deliver the winnings.

### Sorry!

*An apology is due to Jackie Walker, whose name was inadvertently omitted from the list of CVRS board members in the November Newsletter. She serves as a Member-at-Large, completing a 2-year term, and is restored to her rightful place in this issue. See the 2007 directory opposite.*

### — 2007 Directors —

PRESIDENT	Ingeborg Woodsworth <i>mayocreekgardens@shaw.ca</i>	749-6291
FIRST VICE PRESIDENT	Ian Efford <i>efford@shaw.ca</i>	246-1453
SECOND VICE PRESIDENT	Janet Gardner <i>jangardner@shaw.ca</i>	748-1867
SECRETARY	Sharon Tillie <i>sharontillie@shaw.ca</i>	748-8254
TREASURER	Siggi Kemmler <i>siggi-k@shaw.ca</i>	746-8751
MEMBERS AT LARGE	Leslie Bundon <i>lbundon@hotmail.com</i>	748-9219
	Bill Dumont <i>wedumont@shaw.ca</i>	743-9882
	Roger and Anne Slaby <i>rs0321@telus.net</i>	748-4623
	Jackie Walker <i>jacquelinewalker@shaw.ca</i>	743-3650
EX-OFFICIO	Alan Campbell <i>stonefold@shaw.ca</i>	743-3597
NEWSLETTER EDITOR	Leslie Drew <i>sahtlamrise@shaw.ca</i>	748-6152

### — 2007 Conveners —

GARDEN TOURS	Anne and Roger Slaby	748-4623
HISTORIAN	Bev Mountain	746-6339
INTER-CHAPTER RELATIONS	Ingeborg Woodsworth	749-6291
LIBRARIAN	Janet Gardner	748-1867
MEMBERSHIPS	Sharon Pettersson	743-0787
PICNIC/XMAS PARTY	Directors co-ordinating with: Hilda Gerrits Ann Springford	701-0755 746-7303
RAFFLE	Daphne Jackson Dawn Fedorchuk	748-9475 715-1233
SPEAKERS	Alan Campbell	743-3597
SPRING SALE	Ian Efford (co-ord.) Anne Slaby (publicity)	246-1453 748-4623
PROPAGATION	Alan Campbell	743-3597
REFRESHMENTS	Maria Kemmler	746-8751
SUNSHINE	Ann Springford	746-7303
WEB SITE	Alan Campbell	743-3597