



The **Rhodoholic**



Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society

Volume 25:5 May/June 2014

President's Message

In late April, on a sunny Spring morning, ten current and past members enjoyed a coffee meeting at Mayo Creek Gardens. Ingeborg toured us through her Woodland Garden and we gathered over coffee and morning snacks for a review of items raised at our regular meetings. It was nice to meet with past members and have a visit with members who are unable to attend the evening meetings. We would like to continue with the coffee meetings on a quarterly basis.

On the heels of the coffee meeting was the 50th Anniversary Celebration for the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden in Federal Way Washington. You will see a review of this fun and most informative event elsewhere in this newsletter. A new discovery on route to Federal Way was Whitney Gardens and Nursery. If you have not had an opportunity to visit this garden at the base of the Olympic Mountains it is a must. It is a sixty year old, seven acre garden and nursery with endless cultivars of rhododendrons, woodland trees and plants available. It is surrounded by the most spectacular forest of majestic rhododendrons and magnolias.



Upcoming Event:

Summer Picnic on Saturday, June 21. See page 3 for more details.

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May came in with a flurry of activity. Al and Sandy Campbell started us off by welcoming the club to their lovely spring garden. We had the opportunity to visit the Murray's garden in its full glory a few days later. The Kemmlers' shared their garden with the club when the deciduous Azaleas were at their peak. The Cowichan Valley Garden Fair was a colorful event and the community responded by leaving the hall bare of plants by the end of the four hour sale. A number of members missed the showing of the movie, "Heaven with the Gates Open" at the general meeting. They were making their way down to San Francisco, to meet the bus for a most informative, entertaining five days touring up the West Coast. I am unable to put into a few words the grand time we had visiting Redwood Forests and fabulous gardens, both private and public in their spring glory. Stay tuned for a California/Oregon Bus Tour presentation.

Now that everyone has had a few weeks to play catch-up in their gardens it is time to plan for our next gathering. I hope to see all of you at our next social, the June Picnic, in Sharon Tillie's Garden on Saturday June 21. I look forward to meeting and extended the warmest welcome to our newest members: Verna Buhler, Chris Spratt, Gary Young, Mahari Bruce, Brenda Burch, Judith Gilley, Fred Bosma, Darcey Gibbons, Pat Calveley, Garth Wedemire and Liz Leverington.

We do have a few business items to attend to at the picnic. We will be voting on an important motion regarding the Milner Species Garden Project. The information was reviewed at the April meeting and distributed in the April Newsletter and will be reviewed prior to the vote. Another business item we will attend to at the picnic is the naming of the Executive for the 2014/15 season. Please contact Sandra with nominations for the new Executive.

Look forward to seeing everyone on June 21.

Sandra Stevenson



Don't Miss the Summer Picnic

Saturday June 21 at Sharon Tillie's Place

The annual CVRS annual Picnic will take place at the home and garden of Sharon Tillie, 4372 Sunrise Road on the first day of summer –the longest day of the year- Saturday June 21st, 2014 from 11:30 - 3:00 PM. It will be a pot luck with drinks provided, please bring your plates, and utensils and although there are some lawn chairs, a few extras would be appreciated.

As someone said about a potluck-don't bring the same thing as the other guy! There will be a large smoked salmon pasta dish to serve to everyone. Bring your favourite appy, salad, main or desert. Wine and other drinks will be served.

Directions: Go to Gibbins Road which is the road the hospital is on and travel approx. 4 km to the intersection of Menzies and Barnjum. Continue up Barnjum, taking the first left up Sunrise Road. Meander for one km on Sunrise Road, my driveway is the second last driveway on the left. My house is on a long driveway and not visible from the Road.

The ground is flat but please park on the road after dropping off at the house. A few parking spaces for those mobility challenged will be available near the house.

Second Notice of Motion—Vancouver Island Rhodo Species Garden

The following motions will be presented and voted on at the Summer Picnic:

CVRS Support for New Species Garden

Moved: Ian Efford

Second: Siggi Kemmler

"That the CVRS enthusiastically supports the development of a rhododendron species garden at Milner Gardens in accordance with the terms and conditions of a draft agreement between ARS District 1 and Vancouver Island University"

CVRS Financial Commitment to the Establishment of the Milner Species Garden

Moved: Ian Efford

Second: Don Loewen

"That the CVRS make an initial contribution of \$5000 to the establishment of the new species garden at Milner gardens with payment to be made from Society term deposits on their maturity availability"



Hachmann's Ornament

Next Year's Program Unveiled

Your executive have been working hard to lay out a great program starting this fall for the next year. We have plans for some new meetings and one external meeting next April. If you have any comments on our plans please contact Sandra.



The world's largest living plants – Coastal Redwoods – Lady Bird Johnson Grove – Orick Ca.

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| June 21 | Summer Picnic at Sharon Tillie's - 11:30 am to 2:30 pm |
| September 3 | The History of Rhododendrons - ARS Journal Editor, Dr. Glen Jamieson |
| October 1 | Propagating Rhododendrons- Lloyd Gilmore, Victoria Rhodo Society |
| November 5 | All About Irises – Ted Baker, President BC Iris Society |
| December 6 | Saturday 1 pm Christmas Party |
| January 2015 | No meeting |
| February 4 | Education Event – members day |
| March 4 | TBA/ 2014 CVRS Tour of California/Oregon Gardens-presentation |
| April 16 | Joint meeting Juan De Fuca ARS Chapter – 1 pm Port Angeles -overnight trip |
| May 2 | Cowichan Valley Garden Fair 10 am to 2 pm |
| May 5 | Tuesday - May meeting 7:30 pm—from France - Marc Columbe - author and Rhodo expert – Open to Public in local venue |
| May 6-10 | 2015 ARS Convention Sydney BC |
| May 13- 22 | Tentative dates for CVRS 2015 Bus Tour – SW Great Britain Rhodo Gardens |
| June 20 | Summer Picnic and Wrap Up 11:30 am to 2:30 pm – Members Garden |

All regular meetings are held on the First Wednesday of the Month unless shown otherwise above.

2014 Cowichan Valley Garden Fair a Big Success

A lineup of more than 150 eager and early bird plant customers enjoying complementary coffee and donuts welcomed this year's buyers to the ever expanding Cowichan Valley Garden Fair on Saturday May 3. There was an estimated 950 customers this year at the Cowichan Exhibition Mellor Hall, a popular venue. There were 12 growers and plant vendors this year and they mostly sold out within the first two hours of the sale. More than 1220 plants worth \$14,500 were checked out through the CVRS cashiers during the sale.

There were another 18 vendors/groups with booths in the fair featuring products ranging from irrigation installation to soil amendments, compost, garden equipment and gardening books. Non- profits included the Bonsai Society, the Cowichan Land Trust, Cowichan Naturalists as well as the CV Garden Club. As always Lee Valley products got lots of attention and we welcomed two gold sponsors – Home Hardware and Highway Rentals/Stihl Garden Products.

This year CVRS members contributed many plants for the club table and more than 200 items were sold raising almost \$550 for the club. For the first time the Victoria Rhodo Society brought their plants to our sale and sold out with net sales of \$1070 for their 113 plants.

There was great news at the Members table where we signed up 11 new members for the Club-one of the biggest recruitments ever for the CVRS. We look forward to their contributions and fresh ideas for the club.

More than 70% of the CVRS members were in attendance for the 4 hour event and its success is closely tied to all the volunteer help. Net income from



All About Pots Vendor



The Cash Out Exit Crew – Sandra and Lorraine



CVRS Plant Sale Table

the sale was \$1800 to the Club. Overall growers and vendors were very happy with their sales results which were enhanced by the loan of grocery carts from Thrifty's for the sale which is one of the Island's biggest.

A big thanks to Bernie Dinter and the Nurseryland buying group for their generous donation of 100 - 50 litre bags of Fish Soil, a new garden product that was given to the first 100 customers at the sale. 100 2x2 new sale signs were purchased and used for the first time this year throughout the Cowichan Valley -thanks as well to Don Loewen for his healthy donation towards the purchase of these reusable signs.

Next year's Garden Fair will be on Saturday May 2 at the Cowichan Exhibition.



Hardworking Cashiers Don, Judeen and Louise



The Backroom Counting Crew – Verna and Marie



Past President Ian Efford with the donated Nurseryland Fish Soil for Early bird Customers



As Usual Dinter Nursery Had the Best Looking Plant Display at the Garden Fair

Noyo ARS Chapter

Real Pros When it Comes to their Truss and Flower Show in Fort Bragg

CVRS members attended the Noyo ARS Chapter truss and flower show on May 9 in Fort Bragg California during this year's USA garden tour. Our club was invited to provide several judges to assist in the review of more than 975 entries to the largest truss show in California.

The popular show was in a huge tent at the Mendocino Botanical Gardens where a team of 15 judges from the Noyo and other nearby ARS chapters spent the afternoon carefully assessing this year's entries, slightly down from the record 1200 last year. The chapter also conducted a plant sale at the show which made about \$1900 to help defray the show costs.

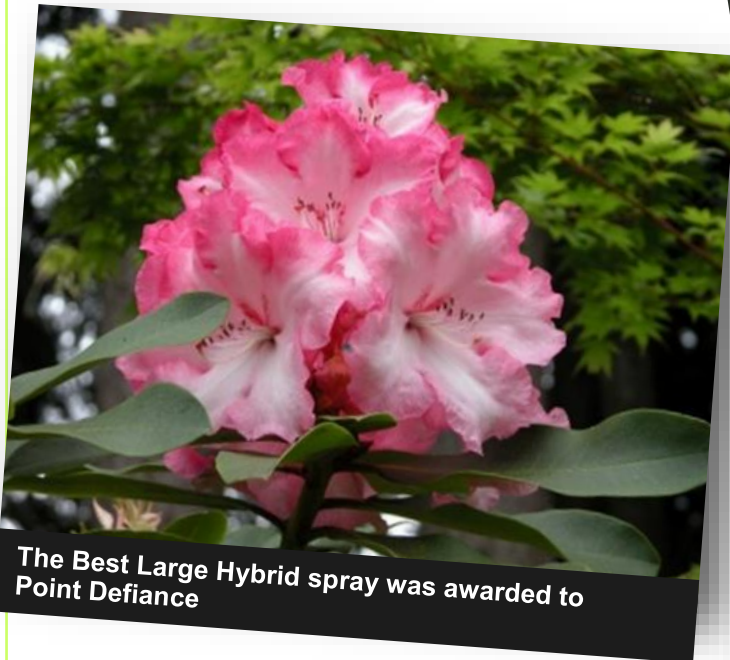


The Best in Show was *R. maddenii*

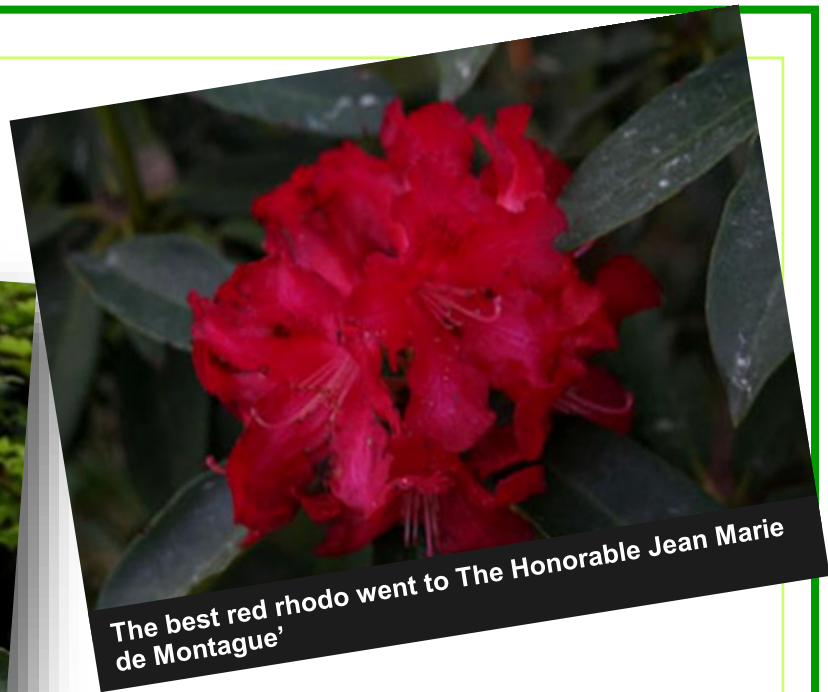


The Best Noya chief was noted. People's Choice Award went to Noyo Star and the Best Lavender rhodo was Arthur Bedford.





The Best Large Hybrid spray was awarded to Point Defiance



The best red rhodo went to The Honorable Jean Marie de Montague'

The Best Yakushimanum Hybrid Truss went to Winning Colours and the best small rhodo went to R. minus.

The best pink rhodo was awarded to Anna Rose Whitney.



Dick Jones with the Noyo Chapter is the organiser for the Show as well as the clubs newsletter editor. He commented "we had a very good number of entries this year and judging was challenging as usual. We appreciated having judging help from our Canadian friends."

Noyo Chapter Show Winners

Class 1, Noyo Chief: **Noyo Chief**

Class 2, White: **Gomer Waterer**

Class 3, White with a Blotch: **Lady de Rothschild, Mrs Tom Agnew**

Class 4: Picotee: **Point Defiance**

Class 5: Cream/Yellow: **Horizon Monarch**

Class 6, Apricot/Peach: **Satsop Sunrise**

Class 7, Pink with a Blotch: **Janet Blair**

Class 8, Light Pink: **Faggetter's Favorite**

Class 9, Medium Pink: **Van**

Class 10, Deep Pink: **Red Walloper, Anna Rose Whitney**

Class 11, Lavender: **Fastuosum Flore Pleno, A. Bedford**

Class 12, Purple: **Anah Krushke, Purple Splendour, Red Eye, Royal Purple**

Class 13, Orange: **Toroiseshell Wonder**

Class 14, Scarlet/Orange-Red: **Dad's Indian Summer**

Class 15, Bright Red: **The Honorable Jean Marie de Montague, Radium**

Class 16, Blood Red: **Black Widow**

Class 17, Blue Red: **Kathy Jo, Black Sport**

Class 51, Fragrant Rhododendron: **fragrantissimum**



Highly Rated Tour to Northern California and Oregon Gardens

Fifty-two Cowichan Valley residents and others from Saltspring Island, Vancouver Island and the mainland completed a 6 day tour of beautiful gardens and redwood forests in California and Oregon May 7—12. “We saw some fabulous and famous Rhodo and plant gardens starting in San Francisco and ending up in Portland during our bus tour” noted Bill Dumont, Tour guide and Rhodo club member.

The tour commenced in San Francisco with a Welcome Wine and Cheese event followed by a visit to Fisherman’s Wharf with its funky restaurants, shops and a herd of at least 150 smelly sea lions resting on adjacent docks. Our first stop the next morning was at the Pulgas Water Temple south of San Francisco where an impressive monument was constructed to celebrate the 160 mile huge aquifer from the Sierra Mountains storage lake to feed fresh water to San Francisco in the 1930’s at a cost of nearly \$1 billion in today’s currency. Nearby 1 square mile Filoli (Fight, Love, Live) Garden built by a Gold Miner at the turn of the 19th century has a 10 acre formal garden and 27,000 square foot castle to impress visitors and it did. The rose garden and other elements of this special place were quite amazing.

We next enjoyed a box lunch at the beautiful Golden Gate Botanical Gardens in San Francisco with its amazing collection of plants from all over the world. The Rhodos were very impressive with peak flowering just finished. We ended the day in Windsor in the Sonoma Valley with a wine tasting at the Hampton Inn.

Next day we headed back out to the coast and our first view of the California Redwoods. The first garden stop was at Bob and Judy Mathey’s private garden where they have established an amazing symphony of rhodos, miniature conifers, ferns and other

companion plants under a second growth overstory of redwoods. On the walk to the Mathey’s we observed the expanse of wild *R. macrophyllum* along the road and we saw this Rhodo in many other locations on the trip. Lunch at the 1890’s Mendocino Hotel was enjoyed by all in this picturesque little town on the ocean.

We then travelled to Fort Bragg and the Mendocino Botanical Gardens where the Noyo Chapter of the ARS was holding their annual truss show, the largest juried flower show in California. Our group proffered up 4 assistants to help with the judging of the more than 975 entries in this year’s show. The Noyo Chapter also has a Rhodo plant sale associated with the flower show. The rest of the group enjoyed the 10 acres of botanical gardens at Fort Bragg and everyone later consumed copious amounts of wine at that night’s tasty supper.

Day three was Redwoods and included several stops in Redwood National Forest including the mammoth trees in the Richardson Redwood grove and later in the day at the Lady Bird Johnson Redwood Grove with its impressive understory of *R. macrophyllum*. We stayed overnight in Brookings, Oregon at a nice



Crystal Springs Rhododendron Garden Portland Or.

Beachside hotel with an excellent supper and breakfast the next day.

The Southern Oregon ARS chapter greeted us at the Shoreacres State Park where the garden of the SM Simpson timber magnate survives after almost 80 years of tending. It was Rhododendron Sunday for the club and they had a truss show and helped shepherd our group through this impressive garden. Some of the rhodos are 50 feet high in this garden setting along the beautiful Oregon Coast.

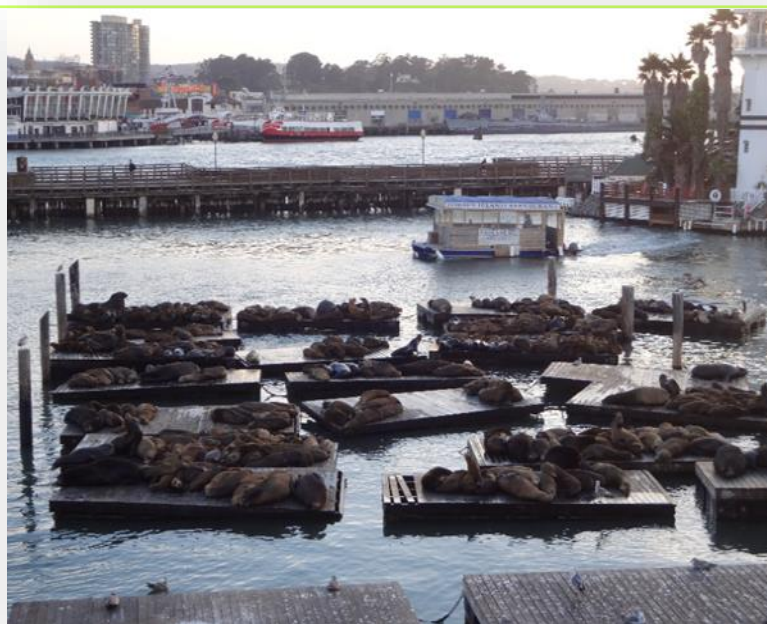
Our next stop was at Hinsdale Garden near Reedsport Oregon. Hinsdale was also a timber baron and owned ships. The garden was abandoned and fell into government hands in the 1940's but has been "rescued" by a local citizens group and the Eugene ARS chapter who are assisting in its restoration. There are more than 700 rhodos and trees planted on the 5 acre site now owned by Federal Bureau of Land Management. Right next door is a herd of more than 150 impressive Roosevelt Elk. The locals were very appreciative of our visit and our donation to the garden's restoration. The group arranged excellent box lunches for us.

We then rushed to Greer's nursery in Eugene where more than 90 plants worth \$3000 were purchased in less than an hour by the group from Harold's garden for later shipping after USDA phytosanitary inspection. We ended the day at the beautifully restored Embassy Suites Hotel in Portland and very much enjoyed the free libations and appys at the hotel's nightly happy hour.

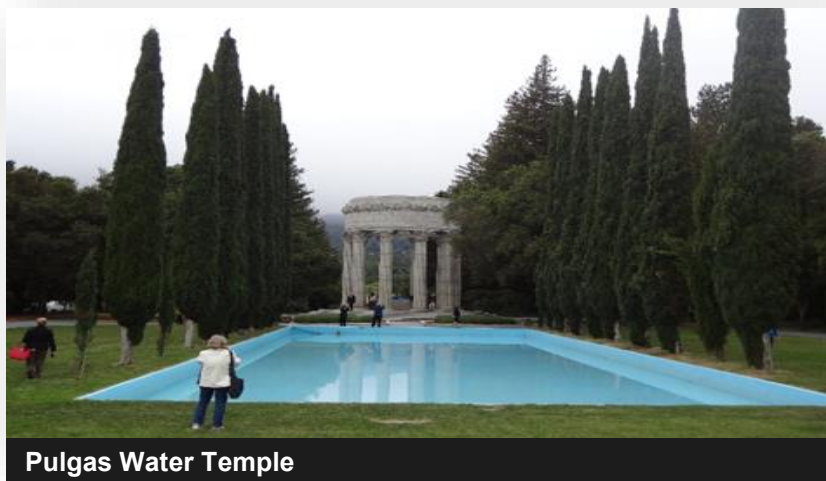
After a savoury breakfast the next morning we visited our final garden – the Crystal Springs Rhododendron Garden in downtown Portland, established about 60 years ago on a 10 acre site. It was one of the many highlights of our weeklong tour.

We all arrived back on the Island about 9 pm Monday night, tired but well fed and happy with the tour. The tour survey indicated a 9.1 out of 10 rating for the tour by participants. The group expressed interest in going to the UK next year on a tour of SW England. Planning has begun for that 7 to 9 day tour in late May 2015.

Dumont concluded " it was a great bunch of people on the tour and the weather was near perfect for all the stops. The tour cost more than \$52,000 all found and following significant donations made to several of the gardens we visited the net income to the Club was about \$4900."



Sea lions at San Francisco Pier 39 Wharf



Pulgas Water Temple



Crystal Springs Rhododendron Garden- Portland Or.



Formal Garden – Filoli Estate – Woodside Ca.



The 2014 Tour Group at Pulgas Water Temple- Woodside Ca.



Crystal Springs Garden - the new Fern Wall



Redwood National Forest-Richardson Grove



Wildflowers along Mendocino Coast Ca.



Flowering Cacti at Mendocino Coast Botanical Garden – Fort Bragg Ca.



Flesh Eating Pitcher Plants at Filoli Garden



CVRS Bus Tour Group – 1000+ year old Redwood tree – Orick Ca.



Shoreacres State Park Rhodo Garden – Coos Bay Or.



80 Year Old Magnolia grandiflora – Filoli Garden



Flesh Eating Pitcher Plants – Filoli Gardens



Formal Rose Garden – Filoli Estate



Staghorn Fern- Filoli Gardens



Noyo Chapter Truss Show – Fort Bragg Ca.



Our Favourite Bus on Tour



Supper at Fort Bragg-Cliffside Restaurant



A popular spot at the Mendocino Botanical Garden



Shoreacres State Park Garden – Coos Bay Or.



**Hinsdale Garden at mouth of Umpqua River –
Reedsport Or.**



Crystal Springs flowing into Garden – Portland Or.



**70 year old Towering Rhodos at Hinsdale
Garden- Reedsport Or.**



Hosta Haven at Crystal Springs Portland Or.

**Old Rhodos at
Hinsdale Garden –
Reedsport Or.**



A Rhodo Celebration

One hundred and fifty people from around the world gathered at the Rhododendron Species Foundation anniversary, Federal Way, Washington to celebrate the Rhododendron Species Botanical Gardens 50th Anniversary on April 25 and 26, 2014.

We gathered at the Hampton Inn for the events, where Mike Stewart and Steve Hootman welcomed everyone. The noise level in the meeting room continued to rise as old and new friends greeted each other. The energy level was palpable.



Friday morning Harold Greer gave a presentation on the History of the Species Foundation. Harold has the history in his genes as he was secretary for the very first discussion meeting to create the foundation. He was 19 years old at the time. During the presentation Harold discussed the “WEED, SEED, GREED, THE BLEED and finally THE WILL TO SUCCEED” in the RSF creation. The history was new to many of us. For example the problems with finances, with finding a permanent home for the collection and the problems around importation of recognized species were presented. He emphasized the critical role that Evelyn (Jack) Weesjes played in the creation and protection of the initial collection.



Garden Art Works – RSF Federal Way, Way



At the time plant material could not be imported from Great Britain to USA due to quarantine regulations. However, rhododendron cuttings could be sent to Canada, rooted and grown on and then exported to USA. Evelyn Jacks was a recent UBC graduate working in the department of Plant Sciences. In corroboration with UBC, Evelyn rooted and grew on the cuttings which eventually became the foundation of the Rhododendron Species Foundation in the US. Without her skill as a propagator and grower and her work at keeping the plant material together the collection would not have survived.

Harold went on to describe how the collection was moved from one location to another until a permanent home was offered to the RSF by the Weyerhaeuser Company in 1974. And here, we were celebrating this important achievement on its 50th Anniversary.

Harold presented the history and then Steve Hootman spoke about the RSF's Role Today and the RSF's Vision for the Future. He addressed the importance of the existing collection in respect to the global protection of the species and the need to save all species of rhododendrons. He emphasized the need to collect and protect all species of rhododendrons not just the pretty ones.

Friday the attendees had the option to visit, with guided tours: Soos Creek Botanical Garden, Lake Wilderness Arboretum or the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden.

They tried something new and different for Friday



evening's dinner. Attendees were invited to sign-up for one of four different restaurants. Just before leaving it was announced that a surprise host would attend each restaurant. The hosts were Steven Hootman, David Chamberlain, Harold Greer and Denis Bottemiller. This provided the participants the opportunity to meet with world renowned experts in an informal way.

Saturday morning started with the AGM of the RSF at the Weyerhaeuser Assembly room. The meeting provided an excellent understanding of the finances and the administration of the Rhododendron Species Foundation. The new board was nominated and elected with addition to the naming of Harold Greer and David Chamberlain to the Board. Following the meeting UBC's Doug Justice gave a presentation of the History of UBC's Botanic Garden and its connection with the Rhododendron Species Foundation.

Saturday afternoon the attendees again had the choice of visiting the three guided tours offered on Friday. As well, species rhododendrons were available for purchase as were the phytos to feed our addiction.

After the banquet Saturday evening David Chamberlain spoke on the challenges facing the





annihilation of the rhododendron habitat around the world. He closed on a positive note with suggestions on how we can work with local governments and peoples to save the species.

In order to achieve the changes there was a request for pledges from the attendees and over \$58,000 was raised spontaneously.

It was nice to meet the second generation of the Walker family who continue to follow in with their parents' passion for rhododendrons.

Harold Greer closed the event with a fabulous slide and musical presentation featuring The Beauty of our Favorite Genus throughout the Year.

In closing, Mike Stewart facilitated the entire conference moving through the agenda flawlessly



with graciousness, warmth and humor. We enjoyed seeing beautiful gardens and the plant material in beautiful sunny spring weather. We appreciate all the staff and efforts put forth to make this weekend most memorable.

Written by Sandra Stevenson in collaboration with Norma Senn and Rhonda Rose.

Thank you to Keith White for the Photos.



New Diagnosis and Pest Control Book for Rhododendrons and Azaleas Now Available

The Compendium of Rhododendron and Azalea Diseases and Pests is a tool for gardeners, commercial growers, consultants, and others who cultivate Rhododendron and Azalea plants in commercial nurseries, home gardens, park and municipal landscapes, and similar settings. The book includes more than 170 images, diagnostic guides, and management recommendations to help users diagnose and manage plant diseases and bug pests attacking their rhododendron and azalea plants.

This book is expected to ship in July. Currently, the book is available for preorder at a \$20 discount. We would like to extend this discount to your Society members through the end of 2014 through a special product landing page. From the American Phytopathological Society.

This comprehensive book does more than provide the most current disease and pest information for commercial and non-commercial growers throughout the world. It provides it in a simple, easy-to-use format that helps readers quickly recognize and control pest-related problems of these valuable and beautiful plants. Symptom diagnosis is improved through a new collection of more than 170 color photos throughout the book and an easy-to-use symptoms-based diagnostic guide.

Editors Robert G. Linderman and D. Michael Benson, both rhododendron and azalea experts in their own right, selected top authorities on rhododendron and azalea diseases and insects to write this new edition. These contributors offer important new and updated information since the first edition of this book was published in 1986:

- Part I, titled Diseases Caused by Infectious Agents, addresses commonly occurring diseases caused by fungi, bacteria, viruses, higher plants, nematodes, and algae. A new section on virus diseases has been updated to include azalea ringspot disease, Rhododendron virus N, and Rhododendron virus A and related viruses.
- Part II, Diseases Caused by Non-infectious Agents, discusses damage caused by moisture, heat, and cold stress, as well as mineral deficiencies and toxicities, air pollution, and pesticide phytotoxicities. A new section

on noninfectious agents covers genetic abnormalities, including tissue proliferation and witches'-broom.

- Part III, Disease and Pest Management, provides a thorough discussion of management strategies, such as exclusion, eradication, quarantine, sanitation, irrigation water treatment, chemical control, host resistance, and cultural practices. A new section, called "Biology and Application of Beneficial Microbes," presents much of the latest thinking and research on a range of crops (not limited to rhododendron and azalea) and highlights new nonchemical approaches to disease and pest management.
- Part IV, Insect and Mite Pests, includes nearly 40 color photos and provides detailed treatments of the full range of pests that affect rhododendron and azalea. The section on pest management has been expanded and includes a table that identifies the insecticides and miticides used to manage these pests.

ORDER ONLINE OR TOLL-FREE 1.800.328.7560 – through the APS website for discounted price of US\$79 for ARS members.

If for any reason you are unsatisfied with your purchase, return it within 30 days with a copy of your receipt for a full refund.



Where is the Crimson Blotch?

While visiting rhododendron gardens in South West England in May, my sister-in-law phoned from the north of England to say that there was an article in The Telegraph about a special rhododendron flowering in Devon. This newspaper is a major national daily in England. As I was in Dartmouth and had an afternoon free, I decided to drive to Newton Abbey to see what all the fuss was about.

The plant was a *R. sinogrande* growing in a commercial botanic garden called Plant World owned by Ray Brown. Thirty years since it was planted as a sapling in 1986, it was blooming for the first time. Ray Brown claimed that the spring heat wave Devon has enjoyed this year had fooled it into thinking

Britain was the Himalayas. As the decades had rolled by Ray had waited patiently for the rare specimen to flower. Finally, the 10ft high plant had responded by produced an explosion of creamy-white blooms.

When I visited the tree it looked a little the worse for wear but it was in flower and the flowers were quite impressive. Unfortunately, the rest of the garden was in need of a lot of attention although I was told that this reflected the very serious winter storms that had battered SW England this last winter. Certainly, there was serious damage in famous gardens near the south coast such as Heligan and Coletton Fishacre both of which had sections closed while downed trees were being cleared.



Ray Brown and *R. sinogrande* from the Exeter Express and Echo April 17, 2014

The tree in flower



It just happened that we had spent ten days visiting some of the major rhododendron gardens in Cornwall during the mid-April flowering season. Many of these gardens had stands of very old plants that reached up to 25-30 metres and some grew older plants of *R. sinogrande*. What was most noticeable about the Plant World specimen was the absence of a deep crimson blotch in the throat of the flowers: a characteristic feature of *R. sinogrande*. The crimson blotch of this species can be seen in the photograph from the garden at Lanhydrock House.



The flowers showing the very large leaves.

One can only conclude that the plant at Plant World is misidentified, not an uncommon phenomenon in gardens around the world.

Ian E. Efford



***R. sinogrande* in
Lanhydrock Garden**

When is an Azalea a Rhododendron?

~Written by gardening expert Pam Beck



The tube-shaped, golden-orange flowers of the Florida azalea (*Rhododendron austrinum*) show the warmer side of the color wheel.
(photo by Jessie Keith)

When is an azalea a rhododendron? Always! The [American Rhododendron Society website](#) explains:

“Rhododendrons and azaleas belong to the genus Rhododendron in the heath family (Ericaceae). Other members of this ornamental-rich family include heaths [Erica spp.] and heathers [Calluna spp.], blueberries [Vaccinium spp.], mountain laurels [Kalmia spp.] and many other important ornamental [and edible] plant genera.

More than a thousand species have been described within the genus Rhododendron. These species are further organized into subgenera, sections and subsections, with the species in each group having certain points of similarity to each other. All azaleas are rhododendrons, with deciduous azaleas belonging to one subgenus (Pentanthera) and evergreen azaleas to another subgenus (Tsutsusi)”

So, how can you tell them apart?

You cannot rely on the traditional gardening wisdom that all Rhododendron are evergreen, because a few species are deciduous, and azaleas can certainly be one or the other. Usually, azaleas have smaller flowers and smaller leaves than classic rhododendron.

The popular Rhododendron ‘George L. Tabor’ has the open funnel-shaped flowers that most gardeners immediately associate with azaleas.



Most rhododendrons have smooth surfaces on the tops of their leaves, however azaleas often have fine hairs that run parallel down the leaf tops and along the edges. Since this is not true of all of these plants, a better guide would be that rhododendron leaves are scaly and often dotted on the undersides while the undersides of azalea leaves have fine hairs that you can feel along the midrib, even if the hairs are too small to see.

With flowers, count the number of lobes and stamens in a single bloom of the plant in question. Typically, rhododendrons have 10 or more stamens—about two per lobe—whereas, azaleas have fewer. Remember, too, that rhododendron flowers are more bell-shaped and are borne in clusters of blooms called trusses that appear almost spherical, whereas individual azalea blooms are looser, more funnel-shaped or elongated and tubular and most flower clusters are not in trusses.

An example of a typical evergreen Southern Indica azalea is the popular 'George L. Tabor'. Its large, light orchid-pink, single blooms have an open funnel-shape that most gardeners immediately associate with azaleas. In contrast, the soft pink trusses found on the classic *Rhododendron* 'Duke of York' are more bell-shaped.



A gorgeous hybrid *Rhododendron* from the garden of Wyatt LeFever in Kernersville, North Carolina has big bell-shaped flowers in large, upright trusses.

Rhododendron species are shallow-rooted with a mass of fine fibrous roots requiring both moisture and air. They need perfectly drained soil with a bit of consistent moisture retention.



For further comparison, and confusion, the evergreen spider azalea (*Rhododendron linearifolium*) has elongated petals uncharacteristically fuzzy leaves.

These flowers are called hose-in-hose, meaning "one blossom inside another".



Native sweet azalea (*Rhododendron arborescens*), can easily reach 8 to 20 feet in both height and width.

Understanding the differences between azaleas and rhododendrons, as well as the best ways to select, plant, and care for them, should encourage gardeners to add a few new specimens to their gardens. Whether they be old favorites or new outstanding hybrids, rhododendrons will brighten any home landscape.

(For more information about Azaleas, be sure to visit the [Azalea Society of America website](http://www.azaleasociety.org)).



Why should I attend the July 4th and 5th Japanese Iris Convention in Victoria?

This is the first time this convention has been held outside of the continental United States so it is more accessible to British Columbians than ever before.



If you are a fan of Japanese irises then you can come and see the very latest introductions and seedlings being evaluated for introduction. If you know very little about these stunning plants it is your opportunity to learn about their characteristics and culture.

At the Judges Training you can learn how to evaluate the quality of a Japanese iris by highly knowledgeable American Iris Society judges. This is a great way to learn how to select quality plants for your garden. You do not have to be in the American Iris Society iris judging program to take this training.

This is a short convention packed with learning, fun and great value. It will take only one evening and a day of your time plus travel.

The Chateau Victoria is our convention hotel so very close to the Inner Harbour. You can stay longer to enjoy this wonderful city at the convention room rate for three days before and three days after the convention.

The registration fee of \$145.00 (\$175.00 after May 31st) is less than the cost to the BC Iris Society who are hosting this event. The fee includes dinners Friday and Saturday, breakfast and lunch Saturday, buses to the Host Gardens, speakers and the opportunity to buy at auction many of the Guest Irises. It is good value for money! The convention rooms are only \$119.00 per night at The Chateau Victoria. Chef Garret is providing excellent meals using local and organic ingredients where possible.



These will be served in the Vista 8 Rooftop restaurant which has stunning views of the city. For more information contact Ted Baker at <tedebaker41@gmail.com> or 250 653 4430. Registration forms are at <bc-iris.org>.

See you at the convention!

Greer's Planting Instructions for Rhodos and Azaleas

On the recent USA Bus Tour we stopped and plant shopped at Greer's Garden in Eugene Oregon. About 90 plants were purchased, many of them special rhodos. Here are fundamentals of Rhodo culture and planting instructions from Harold Greer for rhodos and azaleas.

- 1) **Rhodos must have excellent drainage;** they cannot tolerate soggy, wet soil and must never site in stagnant water. Hot, wet conditions are more dangerous than cool, wet conditions.
- 2) **Rhodos must be planted high:** Never plant deeper than it was previously planted and in most cases planting higher is preferable.
- 3) **Rhodos require acidic soil:** pH 5-6
- 4) **Rhodos must have loose soil:** rhodos are surface rooted plants and require ample air in the soil around their roots. They will not thrive in heavy, clay soil. Bark, coarse sawdust, nut shells, or other organic materials mixed into the soil loosen soil, provide aeration and hold moisture.



Maisonne

- 5) **Rhodos need lots of water:** Never let them dry out!! These plants have very dense root that form a tight compact root ball. If this root ball dries out it will NOT take up water from the surrounding wet soil. When watering keep #1 above in mind. The goal is to provide ample water on a continuous basis so your plant stays continually moist but never sloppy wet.

How to Plant

Prepare your soil to meet the requirements outlined above. Scoop out a shallow depression that will allow the plant to sit one third higher than it was previously planted. Allow a little space under your plant for your amended soil – organic and drainage material. Backfill with more of the amended soil as shown below.

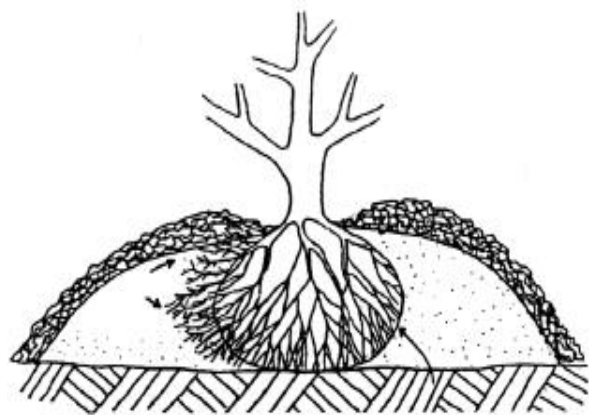
Mulch your new plant with whatever material is available keeping the mulch away from the trunk of the plant and shaping it such that water will run towards the center and into the roots.

This cannot be stated too many times: **WATER IS CRITICAL!** Dry roots are the most common problem with newly planted rhodos.

Fertilize very lightly this first season, increasing amounts the following year. Avoid feeding in fall, just before onset of winter as this encourages new growth at a time when the plants are going dormant, thereby stressing the plant.



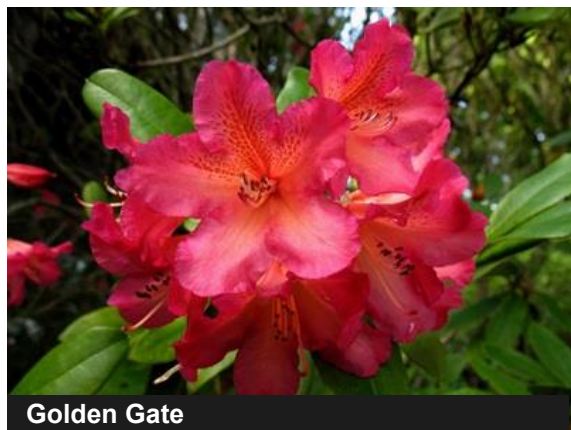
Marabu



Plant in raised beds like this in poorly drained or alkaline soils.



Plant in shallow hole in well-drained soil



Golden Gate



Golden Peaches

We wish to acknowledge the following for the use of their photos in this issue of the Rhodoholic: Sharon Tillie, Sandra Stevenson, Bill Dumont, Shirley Peckett, Mary Ames, Ken White, Dick Jones, Pam Ridgway and hirsutum.com .

A big thank you to all!!



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DVD Player for Sale

We had to purchase a new LG DVD player with remote for use on the recent California Bus Tour. As it turned out it was not used and is now available for sale at \$30. It works fine on any TV and is good quality.

Contact Bill Dumont at 250 743 9882.