



## *Message from the President*

Spring has arrived. A touch cool and blustery, but the evidence of new energy and growth becomes more convincing every day.

So much unexpected sadness has overshadowed our hope-filled resurfacing from pandemic isolations. We look to our gardens, our trustworthy indicators of resilience and life forces, to inspire hope. Emerging leaves, buds and brave flowers do that for us.



Soft, bright-eyed *Primula vulgaris* growing with rich-blue *Muscari armeniacum* brings pause to a garden tour to remember our Ukranian friends.

*Helebores* continue to brighten spirits every day as more and more lift their faces to the sun. Then they remain brilliant for long periods of time, joined by newcomers such as. . .

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## **CVRS April Meeting**

**Wednesday  
April 6, 2022  
7 – 9 pm**

### **Special Presentation**

*John Deniseger*

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### *Banner Photo:*

*Rhododendron luteum* cheers garden guests in the springtime with its clear yellow and fragrant blooms, irrespective of the blues that may have inspired a garden stroll.



*Continued from Page 1*

*Hyacinths, Narcissus, Iris reticulata, Crocus, Chionodoxa*, rising from their winter's rest.

We are looking forward to more outdoor gatherings with friends. On Saturday, March 19<sup>th</sup>, eight of us met for a Potting Bee. It was blustery weather, but enjoyable to chat around a muddy table while we produced more plants for the plant sale in May.

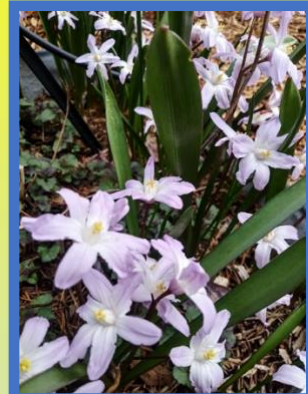
Further to the sale and plants, we want to thank you all for your enthusiastic support for acquiring rhododendrons to enable us to host a reputable plant sale that offers many special and unique plants. Of course, we will have popular companion plants, but our primary focus is to offer plants more difficult to find. We will try to provide at least a partial plant list for our members.

We have decided to hold our next meeting, on April 6, 2022, by Zoom. We are not sure whether this is the right choice now that restrictions have been lifted, but we feel perhaps our planned outdoor gatherings will offer enough opportunities to meet in person.

**Coming up on Sunday, April 3, from 1 – 5pm, is the first of our Private Garden Tours. Elisabeth will open her spectacular Spring garden to guests! Members have received more details.**

*See you there soon,*

*Verna*



**Crocus clumps bloom now on Rose's mid-summer napping slope. Rose's dogs always join her, and at times they amuse one another by rolling over and over down the slope**



# Blooming March 25, 2022

## in Rose Rogan's Garden



*Rhododendron  
callophytum*



*A hardy, early blooming  
species Rhododendron with  
beautiful stature and unique  
blossoms.*

Photos: Verna Buhler

Overheard at a rhododendron sale one year:

*"I don't get the big deal about Rhododendron species, really. Maybe one day I will. .  
. but right now, give me the bright colourful hybrids with names I can pronounce."*

Perhaps ***Rhododendron callophytum***, the noblest of Chinese rhododendrons, will convince some gardeners to include a few species in their gardens.

**GUEST SPEAKER**  
**Wednesday, April 6, 2022 7 – 9 pm**

*John Deniseger*

**Bringing the World to Milner Gardens and Woodland**  
*The Story of the Greig Rhododendron Species Garden*



**John Deniseger** is a retired biologist, and avid gardener, outdoor enthusiast and Past President of the Nanaimo Rhododendron Society. He is the current Chair of the Milner Garden and Woodlands Society Board and a member of the Greig Rhododendron Species Garden Advisory Group. John and his wife June received the ARS Silver Medal in 2021.

*Milner Gardens and Woodland in Qualicum Beach is a 70-acre waterfront estate that was gifted to Vancouver Island University in 1996 and has been open to the public since 2001.*

*In 2014, a partnership was formed between V.I.U., Milner and the five Vancouver Island chapters of the American Rhododendron Society, with the goal of establishing the first Canadian Rhododendron species garden. The intent was to highlight the tremendous diversity within the genus Rhododendron, while educating the public about conservation and where rhododendrons are found in the wild.*

*The story of the Greig Rhododendron Species Garden is one of perseverance, generosity, and teamwork. While the garden officially opened in April 2018, it has become a showpiece which continues to evolve as more species and companion plants are added.*



## **Special Event at the Greig Rhododendron Species Garden**

**Tuesday, April 26, 2022 1 – 3 pm**



Photos: John Deniseger

Rhododendron season is back and heating up. Milner Gardens and Woodlands is inviting members of all District One chapters to a celebration of the Greig Species Garden on Tuesday, April 26th, 1 to 3 pm. Milner will be open only to ARS members at that time (free admission). A welcome will include a few brief speeches, giving everyone a chance to wander the paths while recognizing and appreciating how it has progressed.

The Greig garden opened four years ago; since then, many more rhododendrons and trees have been planted and bulbs and drifts of companion plants added, totally transforming the area. In all, there are more than 220 species rhododendrons here with a few more to come.

### **Anniversary Open House**

**Special Event for ARS Members**

**April 26, 2022 1 – 3pm**

**Special visit to the garden which officially open on April 27, 2018**

**Contact the CVRS Executive if interested in group travel**

[cowichanvalleyrhododendronsociety@gmail.com](mailto:cowichanvalleyrhododendronsociety@gmail.com)

# CVRS POTTING BEE



**March 19, 2022**

**Does it look like perfect weather for a Saturday afternoon Potting Bee?**

**Well, when the work and cleanup was done, the sky did clear, and the sun warmed the empty worktables.**



However, earlier, a warm sunny morning that appeared suitable for sandals, light spring clothing and bare hands, quickly became blustery and cold for Wendy, Candice, Elisabeth, Ali and David whose cold hands split clumps of plants, washed roots, and potted them into one and two gallon pots for the May 14<sup>th</sup> CVRS Plant Sale. Theirs are tough and determined hands and so much appreciated!

Diane, our *ever-ready*, multi-tasking super-woman wrote labels, which Barrie stuck into pots. Candice wheeled the potted plants to the sunny growing area where they will further develop their roots and fresh foliage for two months before being transported to Mary and William's property for the CVRS PLANT SALE.

**To all of you who contributed, thank-you so much:** Joe and Irene made a special trip from their home in Nanaimo, on Friday, to deliver pots they had gathered for the club. Also, on Friday, Alan and Sandy delivered plants for division. Several weeks ago, Kathy invited us to go to her home to dig plants for this potting bee, among them some lovely *Hosta*.

Somehow Ali, our chief coordinator of all CVRS potting bees, knew that we would require exactly 11 bags of quality potting soil and one bag of perlite. How she does that, always amazes me!

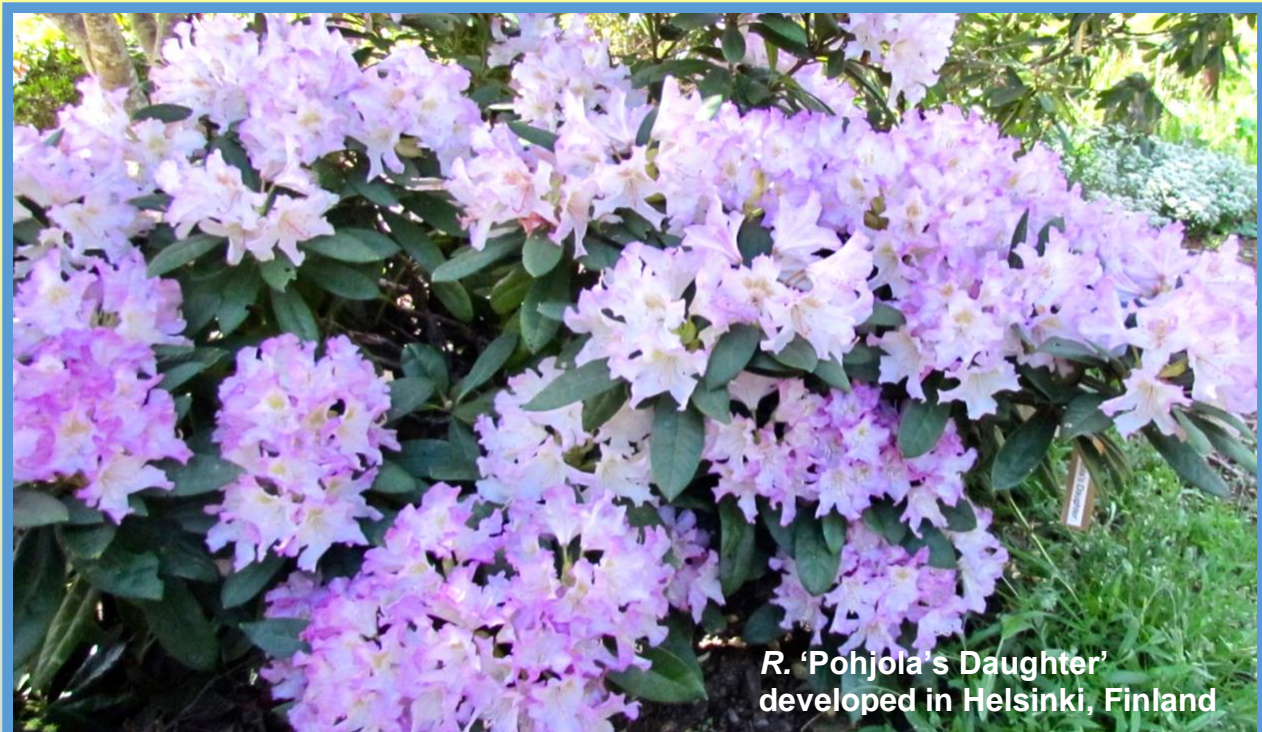
Verna Buhler



# Choosing Rhododendrons for More Reasons Than Flower Colour

~ Verna Buhler ~

With over 28,000 cultivars in the International Rhododendron Registry, finding a few rhododendrons for your garden that you might like shouldn't be very difficult -- and it isn't. The difficulty comes in narrowing your choices due to limited space on your property.



R. 'Pohjola's Daughter'  
developed in Helsinki, Finland

Many shoppers rush into Plant Sales areas and head directly to the rainbow corner where spectacular rhododendrons are in full bloom. They score! Their carts are soon full of rhododendrons with large bold trusses in just the colours that they love. For several years they follow this scooping shopping ritual. Their rhododendrons reliably perform in perfect harmony during the first two weeks of May. In time, when they receive invitations to visit others' gardens over the next month or two, they begin to notice that rhododendrons are still blooming, and some have buds not even beginning to open. Friends have also posted rhododendron photos in March and April.

Do you find yourself beginning to look at your favourite flowering shrub differently and becoming both amazed and overwhelmed by the complexity of choices? Flower variations alone are mind boggling.

# Special Rhododendron Flower Features

## *Corolla Forms: Similar Colour Contrasts with entirely different effects*

**R. 'Starbright Champagne'** (Frank Fujioka hybrid)

- Pointed upright corollas star-shaped; tidy throat of contrasting colour

**R. 'Jeda'** (Jack Lofthouse hybrid)

- Ruffled, curling corolla; double, prominent calyxes
- Outside of corolla contrasts with the inside and highlights the generous spotting



## *Truss Formations:*

**R. 'Goldbukett'** (Hachmann's hybrid)

- Tightly clustered truss

**R. 'Silver Skies'** (Frank Fujioka)

- Lax truss, displaying the outer side and soft blending of colour to the scalloped edges of the bell-shaped corollas





### ***Flower shape and structure:***

**R. 'Senator Henry Jackson' (Larson)**

- Bold, large, flat, wide open; corollas roll backward

**R. 'Winter Dreams' (Jim Barlup)**

- Shy, humble, side-facing, peering outward; corollas curve inward



### ***Truss positions:***

**R. 'Fantastica' (Hans Hachmann)**

- Perky truss perched on top, above foliage

**R. 'Towner Crest' (Evelyn Weesjes)**

- Trusses mingle with lovely foliage



### ***Flower and Truss Sizes:***

***R. diversipilosum* 'Milky Way'** (RSF selected form)

- **Petite ball of tiny, starry white flowers (fragrant foliage)**

***R. 'Loderi King George'*** (Loder)

- **Extremely large, bold flowers and trusses (fragrant flowers)**



### ***Flower Pistil and Stamens:***

**Azalea (Unknown)** : Azaleas – 5 stamens

- **Stunning, very long curling stamens**

***R. 'Muncaster Mist'*** (Ramsden) Rhododendrons – 10 or more stamens

- **Shorter, straighter, contrasting colours**





## ***Size and Colours of Pistil and Stamens:***

***R. calophytum var. calophytum*** (species)

- Prominent supersized pistil

***R. 'Irene'***

- Dramatic stamens with diminution of the pistil



*Take your time when you shop for rhododendrons for your gardens.*

The features discussed above represent only two snapshots of *Rhododendron* flower variations in each example.

Flower colours may be white, red, pink, yellow, almost blue, purple, magenta, orange, and shades and mixtures of most of these colors with striking variations in throats and blotches. Add to those, the effects of colourful pistils and stamens.

Consider too the broad variations in flower shapes: *campanulate*, *openly campanulate*, *ventricose campanulate*, *funnel shaped*, *openly funnel shaped*, *widely funnel shaped*, *tubular funnel shaped*, *flat saucer shaped*, *tubular*, and *rotate*.

Pat Halligan (JARS v38n3) studied “floral substance”, which is characterized as a desirable quality which enhances bloom longevity, reduces marginal burn and makes the flower look and feel more substantial. He determined this to be a combination of petal thickness and inherent stiffness.

*The topic of “Choosing Rhododendrons” for your garden could easily evolve into a six-part series of articles. Factoring into choices are foliage variations, sun and heat tolerance, drainage requirements, size and habit, and hardiness.*

# COMPANION PLANTS of the Month

~ Verna Buhler ~

*In the last newsletter, we announced that Carrie Nelson would be our new voice in Companion Plants of the Month. Unfortunately, Carrie has had to ask that someone else write these monthly articles; as many of you are wonderful plant persons, why not consider this as a new personal challenge for the season?*

In keeping with the theme of dramatic differences in plants, and therefore the abundant opportunities for choice, these companion plants play very distinct roles in gardens. Two are large leaved and bold; two are diminutive in habit and floral displays, but noticeable because of those characteristics.

## Exotic, bold, tropical-like foliage:

There has been a surge in interest for bold-leaved plants. Fortunately, gardeners do not have to fuss with borderline hardy plants to achieve this lush, tropical effect in shade gardens. There are more than 30 *Ligularia* with many variations in plant size, distinctive leaf shapes, and striking floral displays.

Plants like *Ligularia japonica* may grow to 6 feet in height with foliage 16 inches in diameter. The buds are hairy squat green pumpkins, perhaps more interesting than the four-inch blooms.

*Ligularia dentata* 'Britt Marie Crawford' is the darkest of the big-leaved purple *Ligularia*. The leaves emerge a luscious, glossy, chocolate-maroon and given a bit of sun will maintain the purple tones longer before fading to green yet retaining the purple undersides. *L. dentata* 'Osiris Café Noir' is a new version with stunning burgundy chocolate foliage.

*Ligularia stenocephala* 'Bottle Rocket', preceded by 'Rocket' and 'Little Rocket', is the latest and most compact in the Rocket family.



*Ligularia japonica*



*L. dentata* 'Britt Marie Crawford' (above); *L. 'Osiris Café Noir'* (left)



*Ligularia stenocephala*  
'Bottle Rocket'

Photos: Fine Gardening

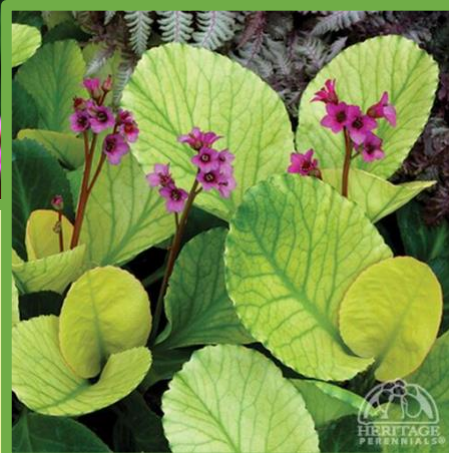




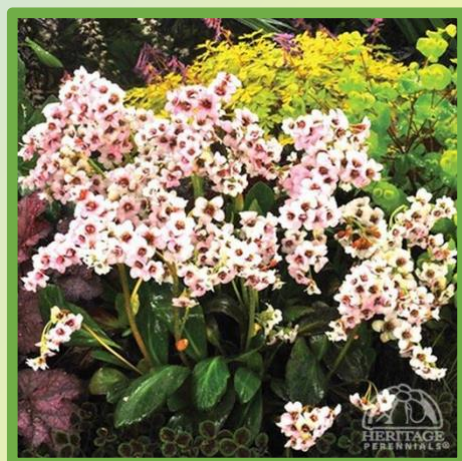
***Bergenia cordifolia***, perhaps ordinary to some gardeners, is a hardy and vigorous clump-forming, evergreen perennial native to Siberia.

Low-growing tropical-like foliage of leathery, shiny, heart-shaped leaves are stunning in various-sized groupings or mass plantings in moist shady areas, and therefore well-suited as companion plants for rhododendrons.

An English selection, ***Bergenia* 'Bressingham Ruby'** provides a rich, deep, burnished-maroon winter colour with magenta-pink flowers in early spring. Both flowers and leaves are lovely in floral bouquets.



There are many cultivars with flowers ranging from white to magenta-pink. The foliage of *Bergenia* 'Lunar Glow' begins a soft creamy-yellow tone, matures to a dark green, and becomes red for the winter.



*B.* 'Dragonfly Angel Kiss' has semi-double flowers emerging snow white that take on a light pink glow as they mature.

*B.* 'Fire and Ice' (Photo right)





## Diminutive and delicate:

***Hepatica nobilis*** is a lovely plant for growing in damp but well-drained, light and fertile soil, particularly under deciduous trees. The flowers appear on fuzzy 4-6 inch stems in February and March while few other plants are in bloom, requiring sunlight for best performance, but respite from sun and heat during the summer.



Its delicate flowers are most commonly a bright blue or lavender, but they also come in white or pink shades. Three-lobed, rounded leaves remain evergreen until spring. Because its leaf shape supposedly resembles a liver, it is also referred to as Liverwort or Liverleaf.

The winter foliage of *Hepatica nobilis*, nearly hidden beneath delicate blooms in March, will soon be replaced by fresh green three-lobed foliage.

## ***Saxifraga umbrosa*:**

Another special charming evergreen foliage plant for the front of the rhododendron woodland gardens is ***Saxifraga umbrosa* 'London Pride'**. It is also known affectionately as *Pyrenean saxifrage*, *true London pride*, *whimsey*, *none-so-pretty*, *king's Feather*, *kiss-me-quick*, and *St. Patrick's cabbage*, among other doting names. A phenomenally useful plant!

A lovely dwarf version, ***Saxifraga primuloides hort***, is an adaptable workhorse with dainty spring flowers.



*Saxifraga primuloides hort*





**Come one Come all!** It's time to get on board for the long-awaited 75<sup>th</sup> (plus 2) ARS Anniversary Convention. There's still room on the tours, in the hotel, in the special meetings and banquets.

If you're in the area, please register and attend one or more of the events. All on Saturday, daytime, are free with registration—the morning clinics and afternoon sessions with three excellent speakers: Juliana Medeiros, Steve Krebs, Valerie Soza. Check out the [schedule](#). The **Plant & Book Sale** will have some wonderful plants and you'll find an amazing collection of books (three lists are included on the [website](#)).



And just in case you think you've "been there, done that" – the chance to tour **Iseli Nursery** (Thursday) is a rare one. This is one of the most outstanding conifer displays and collections in the world (above).



**The Stewart Garden** (formerly Dover Nursery)

That Thursday tour includes a visit with catered lunch at the **Stewart Garden**, formerly Dover Nursery, where Mike and Maria have been installing new beds, boulders, and beautiful trees and plants over several years for the occasion—not to be missed.



**Sebright Gardens, Woodburn Nursery**: also new to northwest conventions. And the pre-tour and post-tour are both packed with destinations sure to thrill plant lovers.



**Dan Hinkley** is now scheduled to do talks on Thursday and Saturday. You're probably aware what a treasure he is to the northwest plant world. Thursday evening he'll be talking about the development of his own garden, and his book recently published, *Windcliff*. As one of the intrepid plant explorers, he'll be sharing his 22 years of botanizing in Vietnam at the Saturday lunch—a nice balance to Steve Hootman's treks seeking species rhodies there.

## We're getting down to the wire!

Join your rhody friends! We are under-booked (about half of those who had registered in 2020), so **we would really appreciate your support**. Registration & details at [www.ars2022.org](http://www.ars2022.org)



Click [HERE](#) for the **revised convention video**.



Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society  
presents

## **Lionel de Rothschild**

on

### ***Exbury Garden Past and Present***

**Thursday, April 21  
7:30 pm  
Qualicum Beach Civic Centre**



It is just over 100 years since Lionel de Rothschild started work on one of the best-known woodland gardens in the world, one devoted above all to his favourite plant, the rhododendron. In just twenty years he created one of the largest gardens of its kind, as well as funding a number of the plant hunters of the day and creating many beautiful hybrids.

His work was continued by his sons and is now looked after by the two generations after that. His grandson Lionel will talk about the history and about the plants in this iconic garden.

*Lionel de Rothschild is the grandson and namesake of the creator of Exbury Gardens. He has written and lectured on Exbury Garden, rhododendrons, and other Rothschild gardens. He is also a trustee of The Rothschild Archive in London and sits on the Garden Council of Borde Hill Gardens in West Sussex.*

***Everyone Welcome! Admission Free!***



# CVRS MEMBER OPPORTUNITIES



## RHODODENDRON *Species Botanical* GARDEN

PO Box 3798, Federal Way, Washington, USA 98063

Email: [Info@rhodygarden.org](mailto:Info@rhodygarden.org)

Website: [rhodygarden.org](http://rhodygarden.org)

Phone: (253) 838-4646

### Associate Member Benefits:

- Free year-round garden admission for each member (subject to change)
- 2 copies of the RSBG Yearbook, *Rhododendron Species*
- On-line newsletter
- On-line plant, pollen, and seed catalogs
- Use of Lawrence J. Pierce Library during business hours

Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society has an Associate Membership

*Check out the webpage*

### *Rhododendron Species Foundation and Botanical Garden*

*...is dedicated to the conservation, research, acquisition, evaluation, cultivation, public display, and distribution of Rhododendron species; provides education relating to the Genus; and serves as a unique resource to scientific, horticultural, and educational communities worldwide.*

RSF Mission Statement



### PLANT PURCHASES from

#### ***RHODODENDRON SPECIES BOTANICAL GARDEN***

I recently received my shipment of plants from the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden that I ordered through the SeaWings import method set up by Colin last year. It was entirely painless, and the plants arrived in excellent condition. I will be happy to show you some of my prizes: *R. niveum*, *R. dendrocharis*, *R. 'Crane'* among others.

Verna

# OPPORTUNITIES

## MILL BAY PLANTAHOLICS

### ANNUAL PLANT SALE

Proceeds from the sale supports **Somenos Transition House** – a program of the **Cowichan Women Against Violence Society**



- On-line Sales at excellent prices
- Over 1500 good quality, healthy plants (mainly ornamental)
- Wooden garden objects
- Contact Elaine Scott at [TheScottRogers@aol.com](mailto:TheScottRogers@aol.com) to be added to the Customer List

Sales Items List will be emailed to the Customer List on **Sunday April 10, 2022**  
Requests made then, will be processed in the order they are received

**Saturday, April 23 to Pick-up orders: 2836 Oceanside Lane, Mill Bay**  
(East off TransCanada Hwy at Kilmalu, South on Church Way,  
East on Welch Road, then South on Oceanside Lane)

- Remaining Plants will be For Sale on Pick-up Day
- Master Gardeners on hand to answer General Gardening Questions



## VIU's Milner Gardens and Woodland Annual Spring Plant Sale 11am – 4pm April 30 to May 1

Great discounts on Heritage Plants from the Milner collection

Come early for the best selections

2179 West Island Highway  
Qualicum Beach  
[milnergardens.viu.ca](http://milnergardens.viu.ca)



# COWICHAN VALLEY RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

## ANNUAL SPRING PLANT SALE

Saturday, May 14, 2022 10am – 2pm

Gibbons Road, Duncan

Contact: <http://cowichanvalleyrhododendronsociety@gmail.com>



- Hundreds of special *Rhododendrons* and companion plants
- Free books and journals (former Weesjes's library collection)
- Knowledgeable plant specialists to answer questions
- Suitable parking available



## CVRS MEMBER VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

for the CVRS Plant Sale - May 14, 2022

- Plant divisions for the Sale (So much appreciated!)
- Friday evening set-up (Bonus – volunteers shop early)
- Saturday Tasks: Sign-Up List will be distributed soon

*Many hands make lighter work and much fun!!*

**2021 – 2022**  
**Calendar of Events**

Contact CVRS:

[cowichanvalleyrhododendron@gmail.com](mailto:cowichanvalleyrhododendron@gmail.com)

**Wednesday, April 6, 2022 7pm (Social – 6:30pm)**

**CVRS April Zoom Meeting**

**Speaker: John Deniseger– *The Story of the Greig Rhododendron Species Garden***

**Friday, April 22, 2022 7:30pm**

**NRS In-Person Presentation at Beban Park**

**Speaker: Lionel de Rothschild of Exbury**

**Saturday, April 23, 2022 10am – 2pm**

**MARS Rhododendron and Garden Plant Sale** Qualicum Beach Curling Rink

**Tuesday, April 26, 2022 1-3pm**

**Open House at Greig Rhododendron Species Garden for ARS Members**

**Saturday, April 30, 2022 10am – 2pm**

**NRS Annual Plant Sale and Flower Show** Beban Park Centennial Building

**Saturday, May 14, 2022 10am – 2pm**

**CVRS Plant Sale**

**Gibbons Road, Duncan, B.C.**

**NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY EVENTS**

**May 4 - 8, 2022**

**ARS Annual Convention, Portland, Oregon** More information <https://ars2022.org/>

**2022:**

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

**2023:**

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

**2023:**

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



## USEFUL LINKS

Cowichan Rhododendron Society:

[cowichanrhodos.ca/](http://cowichanrhodos.ca/)

Victoria Rhododendron Society:

[victoriarhodo.ca/index.html](http://victoriarhodo.ca/index.html)

Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society:

[marsrhodos.ca/](http://marsrhodos.ca/)

North Island Rhododendron Society:

[nirsrhodos.ca/ws/](http://nirsrhodos.ca/ws/)

The American Rhododendron Society:

[rhododendron.org/](http://rhododendron.org/)

Nanaimo Rhododendron Society:

[nanaimorhodos.ca](http://nanaimorhodos.ca)

Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden:

[rhodygarden.org](http://rhodygarden.org)

Nanoose Garden Club:

[nanoosegardenclub.ca/](http://nanoosegardenclub.ca/)

Linda Gilkeson:

[lindagilkeson.ca/](http://lindagilkeson.ca/)

Vancouver Island Rock and Garden Society:

[virags.com](http://virags.com)

Linda Chalker-Scott:

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

Steve Henning:

[rhodyman.net](http://rhodyman.net)

Rhododendron, Camellia, Magnolia

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



**Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society**

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

<http://cowichanrhodos.ca>

### 2020-21 Executive

President: Verna Buhler  
Vice-President: Ali Morris  
Treasurer: Wendy Willson  
Secretary: Diane Allen  
Director-at-Large: Barrie Agar  
Director-at-Large: Candice Feeney  
Director-at-Large: Carrie Nelson  
Director-at Large: Mary Pike  
Membership Chairperson: David Annis

### Convenors

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