

Newsletter

Volume 31:1 February 2020

Message from the President

Diane Allen, CVRS President for February

Hi Friends,

Unlike last year, this January came with a lot of snow and some of our gardens have just started to show signs of life. There is no snow remaining in ours now, and some colour is peaking out.

Our Xmas rhododendron didn't bloom at its usual time, but this week I can see some pink about to show itself. The peonies are already showing off new growth.

So, this is the beginning of what we all look forward to in the coming months, and of course, meeting up again at our next meeting!

Looking forward to seeing you,

Diane Allen



EXPERT PANEL

February 5; 7:30pm
Enjoy the entertaining **Panel of Experts** as it answers your inquiries! (More details on page 2)

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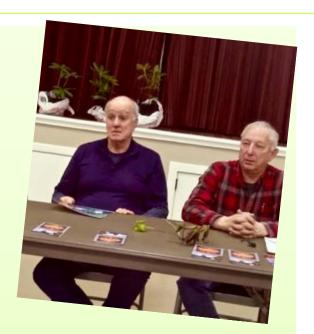
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Expert Panel

February 5, 2020 7:30pm

Enjoy the entertaining **Panel of Experts** as it answers your inquiries! Bring your toughest questions. This event is back by popular demand as, each year, it proves to be *seriously* enjoyable. It may even rank as the most popular of the monthly events for our members.





Sean Rafferty (President of the Rhododendron Species Foundation and member of the CVRS)



Paul Wurz (President of the North Island Chapter ARS, owner of Hidden Acres Rhododendron Nursery in Campbell River, and sitting member of the ARS Endowment Fund)



Ken Webb, (President of the American Rhododendron Society and affiliated member of the CVRS) left in the photo presenting the ARS Silver Medal to lan Efford

Letter from the Editor

Dear Friends,

It is difficult to write a letter that is sure to be relevant on the day that you will read the newsletter. When I first sat down to do this, my letter was accurate to that week in January:

Dear Warmland Rhododendron Enthusiasts!

The part of this salutation that doesn't support what I am witnessing outside my kitchen window, is the "warmland" part. Yesterday, I came in looking like a winterling after knocking six to eight inches of snow from about three hundred trees and shrubs, and today the evidence of that effort has already disappeared. Thank goodness for the help of those occasional blasts of icy wind, as they scatter some of the snow from the trees. And yes, it is still snowing. The cryptomeria and bamboo have bowed to acknowledge global warming.

Okay, I just need my blanket and some puppy warmth.

I better write a new letter when this is passes.

Take heart. We know "this too shall pass". It does every year now.

So today, I write the updated version. The snow is gone, and so much water has joined the melted snow that puddles lie where once the snow created beauty.

I just returned from a walk through the garden to absorb the inspiration that bright new growth, the signs of Spring, always offer. It didn't work that way today.

Today, I saw the *Salix* that was still lying where it fell a few weeks ago. I examined and decided how I would vigorously prune it in an attempt to hoist it upright and encourage it to



Winterlings arrived in the garden – monsters of every shape and size



Did you have a thicker frosting on your cake than George Morgen did?

live. With pruning tasks in mind, I wandered over to the *Pinus nigra* (Austrian Pine) that had been dying last summer. Some horrible sap had been weeping from various parts of its trunk.

What a dreadful sight it was today; it was seriously yellow---dead. This led me to look at the two others in that area of the garden; they too appeared to be afflicted.

I panicked and began running to examine every *Pinus* in the yard. The two *Pinus contorta var. contorta* (Shore Pine) appear to have been hit as well. That was enough. There were many more pine trees in the yard, but I was too discouraged to face those possibilities today.

Back inside, depressed, I began forensic research to determine the cause of death. However, I can't tell through observation because of my inexperience with tree disease. What comes first: insects, fungus, cankers, drought? What I can determine is that I have no time to waste if there is to be intervention. So, I have sent an email to an arborist for help. Hopefully, I won't be too late, as I love pine trees!

Going out to become inspired, backfired today. Instead I am about to quit gardening. Unless I take my glasses off, the mirror tells me I am too old to pursue dreams more suitable to others---yes, the young-and-too-busy. What can I do? I have a plan.

First, I will select my anti-depression CD, Streisand's *Higher Ground*. I will lie down and close my eyes; my caring dog pack will gather



Spectacular winter view over Ali Morris's Garden

close while I absorb the strength of the music for the next hour. Then, the dogs will deserve a swift, demanding hike on Mt Prevost for their support, and of course their dinner. The most important part follows.

I will pour myself a glass of wine produced from the grapes grown in our garden and then I will call my mother who has Alzheimer disease. I will tell her how much I love her. Immediately after, I will watch the News.

In only a very short while, I will realize my selfish pettiness, and become grateful for health and prosperity and for the fact that I have no problems and no excuse, whatsoever, to feel frustrated or sad.

Gratefully,

Verna

Spectacular Beauty in a Pine Wood

The Hobbie Rhododendron Park Linswege, Germany

Words and Photos: Linda Derkach

If you have the spectacular *Rhododendron* 'Scarlet Wonder' or *R*. 'Baden Baden' flourishing in your garden, you have a connection to hybridizer Dietrich Hobbie whose garden and nursery we visited during the 2018 ARS Convention in Bremen, Germany. During his 86 years, Hobbie created roughly 100 rhododendron hybrids. He lived his whole life on his farm in his beloved pine woods in northern Germany near Westerstede.



Note from the Editor:

Treat yourself to Linda Derkach's photo-story of the Hobbie Rhododendron Park in Germany. Visit www.marsrhodos.ca and the January 2020 Rhododvine.

Letter to the Editor

Hi Friends,

With this stretch of mild weather, I went out on Sunday, December 29th and took these photos in our garden, which I thought you might enjoy.

All are Rhododendron 'Lee's Scarlet' which really is Very Early [as claimed]. [I brought



a truss] of this rhododendron to the CVRS Christmas party in both of the past two years. Rose may have tried to propagate it in 2018.



Spring is here - although of course this is likely to be temporary.

Cheers,

Janice McLean

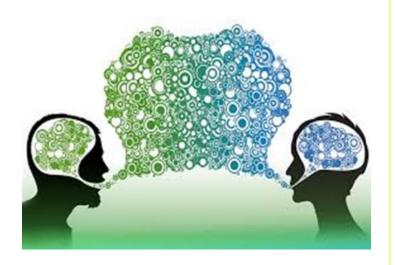
Thank-you Janice,

How cheery that would have been. Hopefully the rhododendron is tough enough to have poked its blooms through the snows of January!

Contacting Your CVRS Presidents

Some of you have been asking how to contact the CVRS as it has been confusing with the CVRS Executive Members Shared President Roles. The most direct means of doing so is emailing:

cowichanvalleyrhododendron@gmail.com



2019 - 2020 CVRS Acting Presidents:

September: Verna; October: Candice; November: Alan; December: Elaine; February:

Diane; March: Ali; April: Barrie; May: Wendy; June: Verna

Monthly Responsibilities for Acting Presidents:

Tasks include:

 Planning for the venue or hosting the Executive Meeting on the last Wednesday of the month prior to the next Monthly Meeting.

(For example, at the end of September, Candice will send an email regarding the time and venue of the Executive Meeting)

- Initiating the Agenda in the same email, and invite additions from the Team
- Chairing or Co-chairing the Exec Meeting invite someone as Co-Chair if wished
- Writing the Message from the Executive for the Monthly Newsletter:

(Due on Friday of the last weekend before the Meeting) This message does not need to be long, and grammar and writing skills are of no concern. If you wish, the Editor will make your content work while maintaining your personal voice.

- Chairing or Co-chairing the Monthly Meeting invite a Team member to assist
- Acting as the Contact Person for Correspondence: Check regularly for correspondence and direct or disperse appropriately. (When in doubt, the Past President, Barrie, will know who could best handle the matter)

When a Tree Falls in the Garden....

Does Anybody Care?

Salix matsudana 'Tortuosa'

In the second week of January, Winter dropped by, so ten-year old *Salix matsudana* 'Tortuosa' lay down to have a winter nap.



Now, Salix do not generally lie down in winter, but this is the second Salix of ours to do so. The first was an older tree, and easily twice as large. She had roots in the Cherry Point area near Cowichan Bay, and one winter I watched her lie down. I was tucked in bed sipping coffee gazing out at our freshly whitewashed garden. Salix was stunningly dressed that morning, draped in wedding lace and curls. As I murmured my admiration for the sparkling highlights in her gown, she dipped her crown toward me and continued to descend into a deep bow. Then she disappeared. With a muffled thud, she released a white puff of snow and mist that floated into the space where she had just been fluttering. Yes, she lay down softly and gracefully.

I didn't witness ten-year old 'Tortuosa' moving to snuggle into the thick white down below him the other day, but his was probably a soft tumble as well. His golden physique, generally statuesque in soft dawning rays that wake up the back garden was noticeably absent that morning. It was disappointing to see that 'Tortuosa' did not spring back up after the snow got off his back, as one expects of the youthful.

Two weeks later, he is still resting there in the garden but is busy taking a very long shower. Soon the two of us will chat about the possibility of

'Tortuosa' getting up and continuing to grow right where he is. He should be encouraged by what Lady 'Tortuosa' on Cherry Point Road was able to do. After all, it was his own mother in her wedding dress, who fell that wintery day in Cherry Point; a short segment of her severed limbs was in fact young *Salix* 'Tortuosa's' life source.

That tumble resulted in a trying experience for his mother that year. With a chain saw George slimmed her profile. She agreed that delivering water and nutrients to such a large gown was a daunting task, but all she requested was that she be allowed to maintain her height. She was then lifted and supported for the remainder of the season by a thickly cabled "come-along" attached to Douglas, a powerful fir. After her makeover, she looked wonderful; not quite as voluptuous perhaps, but genuinely lovely and elegant in her lithe style. Immediately, she set about reestablishing her connection to life support around her.

Lady 'Tortuosa' continues to thrive to this day, many years later. She drapes her twining limbs over the rustic gazebo. Every fall she gifts her curls to replenish the soil beneath *Pseudotsuga menziesii* var. *menziesii* in gratitude for the support he offered when she felt low.

In February, when he is finished with his shower, Young 'Tortuosa' and I will discuss whether the spot where he is resting now will remain suitable for him in the years to come. He apparently likes it moist; he has grown well for at least ten years now. Most of the time the soil where his roots search for nutrients is well drained, but there are a few weeks of the year when he is bothered by soggier conditions, especially when the shallow creek near him becomes cloqged by debris from the torrents escaping the pond. The pond that stores water to sustain its dependents during the periods of drought in summer is spilling over this winter. Perhaps a regular schedule for clearing of debris along the fence-line will provide the solution to improve his drainage for a few weeks each year.

With some help, young *Salix* will have an opportunity to carry on with his life just as his mother did more than fifteen years ago. He too will require surgery to define a narrower profile. As a male he may be more reluctant to part with his admirable broad shoulders. However, if he is as courageous as his heritage suggests, he will redefine himself with a new look. He may discover that cutbacks in timely fashions often enhance more attractive growth in ways he might not



expect. Unfortunately, support for him is not as readily available as it was for his mother. In his case, Douglas is rooted too far away to offer any, so another stanchion will be required.

So, of course, every living and rooting being around young *Salix matsudana* 'Tortuosa' cares deeply about his survival. Therefore, the outlook for his recovery is not as bleak as it first appeared, and it is expected that his personal upper story will be revealed in the upcoming fall season. In time, he will offer his shading support as in the past and will become proudly photogenic once again.

Verna Buhler





Christmas Party

December 1, 2019



Photos submitted by Sharon Tillie and Verna Buhler

The Christmas Party proved to be another wonderful celebration for all who attended. It begins to sound like a cliché when we praise the variety of delicious offerings on the buffet table, and the lovely atmosphere created, in part, because of the McLay Heritage House venue.

November must have been busy for most of our members because there were fewer entries in both the Photo Contest and in the Tall Tales Contest. Nonetheless, these events still brought rolling laughter and abundant witty banter.

Every one of the three Award winners was taken by surprise. The audience particularly enjoyed watching the recipients who were not attentive as the lovely speeches about their contributions were being delivered. To the complete thrill of everyone there, the winners suddenly heard their names spoken and recognized that, in the silence that followed, all eyes watched as they became aware that they themselves were the center of attention. All three winners delivered similar skits of their epiphanies.

Barrie Agar received the Silver Bowl Award for her notable contribution to the Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society. She served as the President of the CVRS from September 2016 until June 2019. She currently serves on the Executive as the Past President and on the Garden Fair Planning Committee.





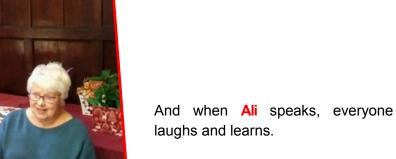
Elaine Kitchen and Carrie Nelson were both awarded the American Rhododendron Society Bronze Medals. These medals honour the outstanding contributions of these two individuals to the Cowichan Valley rhododendron Society Chapter.

Elaine has served for many years on the Executive of the CVRS and has contributed many hours to the successful organization of the Cowichan Valley Garden Fair.

Carrie Nelson recently served as President of the CVRS in 2015 to 2016, when it required skilful rejuvenation and reorganization. Her efforts reenergized the society and enabled it to continue to grow and thrive.

At the festive tables around the room, enthusiasm and high spirits were evident.

Sandra really was just getting started.







Tall Tale Winner, **Janice McLean**, was the most entertaining of all tall tale tellers at the Christmas Party.

The World of Saltspring Island According to Janice is home to the most fascinating characters.



The World at another table became serious for about ten minutes, that is, before the Tall Tales Contest began.

Overall, a delightful wrap-up to 2019!

To our American Rhododendron Society Friends,

It is with great sadness that [we] pass on the announcement that Craig Clarke passed away on January 14, 2020.

Craig, one of our founding members, will be so greatly missed; he worked ceaselessly for Nanaimo Rhododendron Society, and was such a great friend to all of us.

Arthur & Susan Lightburn



Nanaimo Rhododendron Society Executive 1992 - 1993



Craig, on Stubbs Island, in May 2002

Useful Links:

Cowichan Rhododendron Society:

cowichanrhodos.ca/

Victoria Rhododendron Society:

victoriarhodo.ca/index.html

Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society:

marsrhodos.ca/

North Island Rhododendron Society:

nirsrhodos.ca/ws/

The American Rhododendron Society:

rhododendron.org/

Nanaimo Rhododendron Society:

nanaimorhodos.ca

Nanoose Bay Garden Club:

nanoosegardenclub.ca/

Linda Gilkeson's website:

lindagilkeson.ca/

Vancouver Island Rock and Garden Society:

virags.com

Linda Chalker-Scott:

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

Steve Henning:

rhodyman.net

An Update from Sean Rafferty

President of the Rhododendron Species Foundation

I should like to thank the membership of the Rhododendron Species Foundation for its gracious and continuing patronage and wish each of you the best of health and happiness for the coming year. I also wish to extend my unstinting gratitude to the RSBC staff, whose dedicated labour has made our garden so successful. The impressive effort of both groups powers our progress.

Several positive events occurred at the garden during the course of 2019. These will continue throughout 2020 and beyond, and I should like to touch on some of them below.

Our landlord at the RSBG, formerly Industrial Realty Group now operating as Woodbridge Corporate Park (WCP), has replaced its corporate liaison and spokesperson. This replacement, which occurred late in 2018, has resulted in a marked transformation in communication between us and our landlord, initiating congenial, constructive, refreshing and ongoing discussions. Prior to this change, communication was woefully absent. WCP has now publicly voiced to news media and on its website, its desire to preserve the RSBG in its present location.

"As the owners of Woodbridge Corporate Park, we are committed to restoring much needed jobs in the community — generating critical tax revenue for the city — as we preserve this unique industrial site and many of its natural assets. We have an excellent working relationship with the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden and fully appreciate all this cherished community asset means to Federal Way and its residents. To that end, we are making every effort to maintain the

Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden as an integral part of Woodbridge Corporate Park for many decades to come."

I am confident that our remarkable garden will remain in place well into the future. Presently, the RSF and WCP have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with a view to negotiating a long-term lease for the RSBG property.

In December, the RSF initiated a new land survey of the RSBG property, now completed, which will be reviewed at the end of January. The original lease of land from the Weyerhaeuser Corporation lacked clarity in some areas. This new document will establish the parameters of the RSBG and form an integral part of the long-term lease negotiations.

There have been a number of initiatives percolating for quite some time which, upon realization, will refresh the image of the RSBG in both the virtual and real worlds. In a short time, we will be rebranding our image with a revitalized logo and updated website design. Britt Board, our knowledgeable and skillful outreach manager has taken the lead in this area in order to keep us current and

reinvigorate our image to the outside world. We expect to implement these changes in the coming months.

Complementing this virtual rejuvenation, the garden itself will see a welcome facelift this summer with the renovation of the Visitors Center and plant sales pavilion, in addition to the renewal of the alpine garden. We shall also be embarking on a major capital project to install interpretative signage throughout the garden. This is a project that has been long wanting, and we feel that this is the time to proceed. While the Walker Trust has contributed \$50,000 to seed this endeavour, we welcome membership support in this, and all our other improvements.

We are also in the process of upgrading the electronic database for our collection and are consulting with other botanical gardens throughout the world to seek their opinions respecting the software in use at their gardens. The RSBG database is of prime importance to the garden, and we should like to make it more practical and functional, with parts of it readily accessible to the membership. The Walker Trust has also seeded this project with a contribution of \$25,000.

And, speaking of our collection, we must acknowledge the efforts of our Executive Director Steve Hootman for his care and development of this asset. It is arguably the largest and most praiseworthy collection of rhododendron species in the world. Steve recently returned from explorations in China adjacent to the border with Vietnam. Several new taxa of rhododendron were discovered, in addition to numerous companion plants. Funding of these explorations in search of new or additional forms of existing species has always fallen to Steve's self-reliant ability to locate the necessary wherewithal from private sources. The

RSF, surprisingly, has never had a budget for plant exploration.

The Norris-Rugel Charitable Trust (NRCT), a steadfast patron of the RSF, has generously stepped forward to help create a stable source of funding for the curator or its nominee to continue plant exploration in the wild. The NRTC will donate to the RSF up to \$50,000 per year (to a maximum of \$150,000), which will be matched by the RSF. This match challenge will provide a Plant Exploration Endowment of \$300,000 and provide earnings solely for plant exploration. The first \$50,000 tranche has already been matched by the RSF thanks to a very generous donation by board members Marilyn Lamont and Bob Mast, creating a \$100,000 first deposit to the endowment. You may wish to give some thought to supporting this year's goal of another \$50,000 match.

There are wondrous things afoot at the RSBG this year. Please pay us a visit and revive your soul. We are cruising on the energy of a record year for plant sales in 2019 and are extremely excited with the above-noted projects for 2020. Please take the time to visit the spring online catalogue and peruse the fine delicacies on offer.

For those who are unaware, the RSF Annual General Meeting will be held in conjunction with the 2020 ARS Spring Convention in Vancouver, Washington. The RSF AGM is scheduled for the morning of Saturday, May 2, 2020. The Convention, with so many RSF board members at the organizational helm, is certain to be a rousing success.

Warmest regards, Sean Rafferty, President, RSF

Rhododendron Species!!

Available from the Rhododendron Species Foundation in Federal Way, Washington.

Visit the RSF website to view the Plant Sale List and to place your orders: Info@RhodyGarden.org





Rhododendron maddenii ssp. crassum









You're invited to the celebration!



Hosted by ARS District 4 at the Heathman Lodge Vancouver, Washington

20/20 Vision International speakers include:

- Kenneth Cox from Glendoick in Scotland
- Lionel de Rothschild from Exbury in England
- **Jens Nielsen**, plant explorer from Denmark
- Steve Krebs and Juliana Medeiros from the Holden Arboretum
- Steve Hootman from the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden
- Valerie Soza from the University of Washington
- . .and more!





Garden tours include:

- Crystal Springs Botanical Garden
- Cecil & Molly Smith Garden
- Portland Japanese Garden
- · Lan Su Chinese Garden
- Iseli Nursery
- Woodburn Nursery
- The Stewart Garden (formerly Dover Nursery)
- Sebright Gardens

Also: Plant sale; Photo exhibit and contest; Poster session; Special clinics

Pre-tour: Around the Sound

Post-tour: Willamette Valley and Oregon

Coast Excursion

Information at: www.ars75.org

Calendar of Upcoming Events



SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2020

Qualicum Beach Seedy Saturday: Qualicum Beach Civic Center

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2020; 7:30pm

CVRS Monthly Meeting Guests - Expert Panel: "Answers to Your Questions"

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2020

(Qualicum Beach Civic Centre)
Mt Arrowsmith Monthly Meeting: "Pruning with
Rose Prufer" (See Information Below)

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2020; 2pm

CVRS Book Club Meeting Verna and George's: 3908 Cowichan Lake Road, Duncan

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4, 2020; 7:30pm

CVRS Monthly Meeting; Guest Speaker – Norma Senn

THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 2020; 2pm

CVRS Book Club Meeting Verna and George's: 3908 Cowichan Lake Road, Duncan

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 2020; 7:30pm

CVRS Monthly Meeting; Guest Speaker – Rose Prufer

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 2020; 7:30pm

(Qualicum Beach Civic Centre)
Mt Arrowsmith Monthly Meeting: *Lionel de Rothschild* of Exbury Gardens, England

THURSDAY, APRIL 16, 2020; 2pm

CVRS Book Club Meeting Verna and George's: 3908 Cowichan Lake Road, Duncan

SATURDAY, APRIL 18, 2020;

10am - 2pm

(Qualicum Beach Civic Centre)
MARS Rhododendron Show and Sale

SATURDAY, APRIL 25, 2020

Cowichan Valley Garden Fair: Mellor Hall (Visit the Garden Fair website)

APRIL 30 - MAY 3, 2020

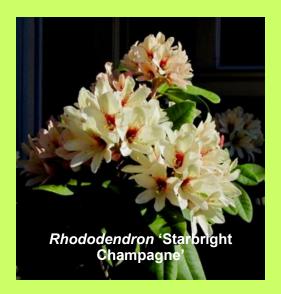
(See Notice in this Issue Page 12)
ARS ANNUAL CONVENTION (75th
Anniversary) Portland, Oregon

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 2020; 7:30pm

CVRS Monthly Meeting; Guest Speaker – Bill McMillan "Cultivation, Pruning, Pests and Diseases Specific to Rhododendrons"

SATURDAY, MAY 9 & SUNDAY, MAY 10, 2020

(Qualicum Beach and Parksville gardens)
MARS Mothers' Day Weekend Garden Tour



Pruning with Rose Prufer (...or as we say in MARS, "Pruferizing") MARS Meeting in Qualicum Beach

Nothing strikes fear into a gardener's heart more than the thought of pruning. But have no fear – Rose is here!

Horticultural expert Rose Prufer will teach us how and when to prune rhododendrons, azaleas, and other plants for best results.

Tough love really does go a long way when faced with leggy, unattractive and poorly performing shrubs. But judicious pruning can result in healthy, attractive and garden- worthy plants. Don't miss this informative session on an essential gardening task!

About Rose Prufer

Rosemary's passion for plants started at a young age, and in 1985 she completed the Horticulture Program at BCIT. Her first job as a custom propagator of rhododendrons launched a career-long interest in propagation. Rose was a long-time member of the International Plant Propagators Society (IPPS) and has kept her knowledge current through various courses. Rose has been a member of several chapters of the ARS for over 30 years. Now retired, she loves to share her knowledge and experience with other gardening enthusiasts.

2019-20 Executive

President: Shared/CVRS Executive Team

Vice-President: Diane Allen

Past President: Barrie Agar

Secretary: Verna Buhler

Treasurer: Elaine Kitchen

Members-at-Large: Alan Campbell, Candice Feeney,

Ali Morris, Wendy Wilson

Membership Chair: David Annis, 250-748-1338

Convenors

Sunshine: Mary Gale

Tea: Judeen Hendricksen

Raffle: Hilda Gerrits

Club Liaison: Alan Campbell

Program Committee Co-ordinator: Alan Campbell

Garden Tours/Trips: Al Murray

CV Garden Fair: The Team Christmas Party: The Team

Library: Verna Buhler

Newsletter Editor: Verna Buhler

Newsletter design/format & website edits by Mary-Lynn Boxem (mlboxem77@gmail.com) ML Media Design www.mlmediadesign.ca





Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society

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

http://cowichanrhodos.ca



Saturday, April 25, 2020

http://cowichanvalleygardenfair.com



www.facebook.com/ CowichanValleyGardenFair