

# Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society

Newsletter

Volume 33:6 June 2022

## *Message from the President*

Hi Friends,

There are days when we are convinced that the seasons of spring and summer are truly on their way, but then we trudge back inside to pull on our heavier clothing to go out to work in the garden. Repeatedly throughout the day, we discard, collect, then discard the layers of sweaters, jackets or vests as we deem necessary each hour. By the end of the week, fences and posts appear well dressed.

Plants, however, have decided to break out. That's a good sign! Rhododendrons and azaleas are almost clashing with colour. Perennials are doubling in size in only a few days. I was shocked to see so many feisty sprouts in our vegetable garden.



*Rhododendron 'Old Copper'*

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## **CVRS June Meeting**

**Sunday  
June 26, 2022  
11 - 3 pm**

### **Special Event:**

*Summer Picnic  
and AGM*

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**Banner Photo:**

*Rhododendron*

*'Medusa' nods its  
optimistic greetings*

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Each year, I take photo walks through the garden to record which plants bloom at approximately the same time. What I have found is that moving plants to create complimentary blooming combinations is no longer high on my garden design task list. Plants are more impulsive, or perhaps adaptive, than I assumed; they do not necessarily follow rules or designated patterns. That is one reason that gardens delight us so much – they offer so many surprises, changing year after year.

We still see rhododendrons blooming this month; *Rhododendron* 'Old Copper' is a trustworthy late June bloomer, and with it is *R.* 'Tortoiseshell'. The purple and lavender coloured rhododendrons such as *R.* 'Florence Parks' and *R.* 'Arthur Bedford' are currently complimenting one another, and the deep dark flowers of *R.* 'Polarnacht' are enriching the garden bouquet. *Rhododendron* 'Cadis' with its relatively low and broad stature is now opening its broad pink trusses on every branch of the deep green mound. *Rhododendron* 'Midsummer' is in no hurry at all this year.

We approach our summer break. This is the last President's Message I will be writing in your newsletter, as my term as President will conclude at the AGM on June 26<sup>th</sup>.

I thank you all so much for your continued support during the past two years, through a particularly unique period in our club's history. As Ken Webb said about his leadership through the COVID years as ARS President, he feels a bit sad at having missed out on the happier social experiences that accompany leadership during normal periods of an organization's life. However, together, we made through, and we are moving into happier times.

*I look forward to seeing all of you under the rose arbours, in Janice and Laurie's garden, at the Summer Picnic on June 26<sup>th</sup>!*

*See you there,*

Verna





## With Sadness

### We Fondly Remember Two Former Members



*We Say Goodbye to  
Anne Slaby*



***“Babylon. It’s white and has such a lovely truss. One of the early hybrids; 1955 - I think.”***

Anne Slaby, her eyes enthusiastic and smiling, did not hesitate, even for a second, before naming and describing the rhododendron that she looked forward to seeing eagerly each spring. But no, this was not one of the plants she was able to take with her when she moved to her new home in Arbutus Ridge. *“The plant was too big, you see. But I did take some small rhododendrons with me. Some that are rather interesting perhaps, but it was so hard to choose. I have such a little yard now.”*

At her home in Arbutus Ridge, a fluffy grey ornament hanging from her eaves bounced madly about. A squirrel had wrapped itself around a suet feeder, pulling special treats through the wires. Her backyard was a haven for well-fed birds and squirrels that fascinate her.

Adventurously, Anne had left England for Canada by sailing to Montreal, and having assessed that Toronto’s climate was too cold, travelled by train to Vancouver. Although a nurse trained at the highly reputable Children’s Hospital for Sick Children, Great Osmond Street, she required additional obstetrics training before she could work in Canadian Hospitals.

She met Roger at one of Vancouver’s “displaced persons” Pillows and Candles parties. *“Or maybe it was cushions,”* she chuckled. After a short courtship they flew to England to marry and then immediately flew back so that Roger could pursue a Masters’ Degree in History at Washington State University. Roger had previously earned a degree in Science and Horticulture. After their two children arrived, they decided Canada would be a more suitable place to settle and moved to Squamish, where Roger earned employment teaching at a private school, which, over time, became the Easter Seals Camp. Anne worked on a part-time basis as an Ambulance attendant administering care to patients in route to the Lion’s Gate Hospital.

The Slaby's rhododendron propagating passions began in Squamish; between teaching assignments Roger worked at a nursery and came to know Les Clay heightening his interest in rhododendrons. Because Roger's parents lived in Oregon, Anne and Roger travelled regularly through the areas where they could visit Whitney's Nursery, and the Van Veen's that specialized in rhododendrons. Roger's assignment with the Ministry of Environment brought them to Vancouver Island, and in time they purchased four acres on Cherry Point Road near Cowichan Bay, bringing fifty-three rhododendrons with them to begin their woodland rhododendron garden and open Cherry Point Rhododendrons. Roger was the horticulturist and propagator, and Anne the enthusiastic salesperson who could quickly lead customers to specific rhododendrons, and readily stated their favourable features and their specific growing requirements.

When Roger became ill, Anne had 1400 rhododendrons to sell between her daily visits to the hospital. Soon, it became necessary for her to leave Cherry Point Rhododendrons and she moved to Arbutus Ridge.

The strength and feistiness characteristics of Anne sustained her for many more years. Of her move she said, *"Well yes, it is different. What I don't miss is all the watering---and especially the worry. We, my dogs and I, keep busy, you know. We pile into the car and go to Cherry Point Beach for a walk twice a day. Rain or shine."*

Anne continued to attend the Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society Plant Sales and Summer Picnics, but eventually found that staying home suited her changing energy levels.

*Thank-you, Anne, for your many contributions to our community over the years that you spent with us.*



Author's Note:

*The blooms of Anne and Roger's Cherry Point Rhododendron property were visible across the hay field from my home on Cherry Point Road. Some of their outstanding rhododendrons, 'Sir Charles Lemon', 'Loderi Venice', Loderi 'Pink Diamond', 'Loderi King George', 'Point Defiance' and 'Polar Bear' were the first rhododendrons to find homes in my garden, and those moved with us to our current home.*

*"Thank-you, Anne, for such an introduction to stunning rhododendrons! I am most grateful for your guidance."*

Verna Buhler

# Siegfried Otto Kemmler



**With sadness we say  
goodbye and thank-you to  
Siegfried Otto Kemmler --  
Siggi.**

**He left us on May 27, 2022  
at the age of 84.**

**Siggi was born in Leipzig  
Germany on December 13,  
1937.**

**Siggi was bold and adventurous throughout his life.  
By his early teens he had escaped from communist East  
Germany to the West.**

One evening, in Heidenheim, in a chance encounter with a young, vibrant woman, he was instantly convinced that Maria would be his life partner; they were married for 67 years.

In April 1960, he swept up Maria and two young children and crossed the Atlantic to start a new life in Canada. Soon after landing in Hamilton, Siggi joined the Hamilton Symphony Orchestra; musically talented and hard-working, he had learned to play the violin at the age of 6.

After working a few years in the steel industry, the West intrigued him, and he set off for British Columbia. Siggi's career as a millwright, foreman and other roles took the family to amazing locations including Prince Rupert, Kitimat, Gold River, Tahsis, Crofton, Duncan and the TRIUMF facility at the University of British Columbia.

Conditions of his childhood did not present him with opportunities for secondary education. Education however was his life-long desire. With the unwavering support of Maria, and after 5 years of dedicated study and work, Siggi finally realized his dream in November 1988. While working at UBC, he studied and was granted a Bachelor of Arts with a double major. His passion for education was further expressed in the financial support he provided to those of his grandchildren who sought higher education.





Siggi was very pleased when a species rhododendron, which he had growing in a protected location near the entrance to his deck, bloomed for him.

He enthusiastically explained how *Rhododendron sutchuense* was a spectacular, very early bloomer and had long foliage that could reach 12 inches in length.

When, in the late 1960's, Siggi and Maria purchased their first little 20ft sloop, they discovered a deep love for sailing. In 1974, the 35ft sloop, Elusive, joined the family, and in 1981, after teaching himself celestial navigation and acquiring his HAM radio license, Siggi and Maria sailed a little red sloop 'Tanager' to Hawaii and back.

In 1994 Siggi and Maria built their retirement home in Duncan and over the course of the years since, crafted much of their 5 acres into a gorgeous forested rhododendron, azalea, and flower paradise.

Siggi's passion for learning endured throughout his retirement, most evident in his remarkable collection of gorgeous books. So too, his passion for sailing endured and in 2015 he crewed for a friend and sailed from British Columbia to San Diego. He continued sailing in and around Vancouver Island in his 28ft sloop – 'single-handedly' thru to the summer of 2021 at the age of 83.



Thank-you Siggi, for your many years of support, service and generosity to the Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society.

"May you have fair winds and following seas, Siggi"

# CVRS SUMMER PICNIC

SUNDAY, JUNE 26, 2022

11am – 3pm

Our generous hosts:

*Janice and Laurie Moseley*

3474 Kingburn Drive

Cobble Hill, BC



*“We have a wrought iron gate at our entrance on Kingburn Drive and a long drive-way that leads to our house. Those of you with any “prancing” issues should drive up to the yard. There is parking space in our field.*

*And . . . our roses should be in full bloom!” Janice Moseley*

## **CVRS will contribute:**

- Two main food proteins – Maple Ham and Chicken Marabella
- Wine, red and white, and soft drinks
- Paper napkins

## **MEMBERS are asked to bring:**

- Favorite potluck side dishes: salads, desserts (Serving utensils for your dishes)
- Plates and utensils, and if possible, a chair\*

*\*Our Hosts/CVRS team will have some chairs, paper plates, plastic cups, and utensils available if needed*

**AGM will follow. . .**





# Memories of Picnics Past

2015 - 2019 (Pre COVID)

## Ian and Shirley Host the June 2015 Summer Picnic



Ian presents awards to Carrie and Sharon;

Liz selects salads from a generous buffet spread out in the sunny backyard;



Marie sits down with her brilliant smile to perform a few Treasurer duties;



Siggi stands to compliment and thank Bill for organizing one of the best garden tours he has ever experienced;



Peter and Sandy concur that they have won the top prizes of the day;



Ingeborg joins in the laughter. Anne seems to agree with all of them.



Wonderful  
Memories!





## George and Verna Host the June 2016 Summer Picnic



Peter, the enthusiastic initiator of the *Crazy Hat* theme for the Summer Picnic, explains to Ali and Judeen why he arrives in full understatement – a tiny flower pinned to his favorite tam; whereas Ian steps out sporting his favourite flowers, irises, perched high on his top hat.

Dixie trots away with her chosen draw prize, while Anne, Madeline and Ken listen for their lucky numbers to be called.

Picnics offer time for those more serious discussions as shared between Ian, Siggie, and Ken, and between Anne and Trudy.





## Maria and Siggie Host the June 2017 Summer Picnic



Elaine expresses gratitude on behalf of the CVRS for the generosity of Maria and Siggie in hosting the picnic.

Peter shares his sadness and concern for his ill granddaughter with Madeline and Maria.

Anne and Mary plan their favourites for the plant draw.

Overall, a warm and patriotic summer picnic event, despite the absence of sunshine, because of the beautiful setting and warm and caring friendships.





## Dorothy and Randy Host the June 2018 Summer Picnic



Ian and Sharon thank the angelic hosts for their lovely hospitality.

Most people stop chatting and smile for a camera – sweet and friendly ones like Joyce. Sassy Sandy does her own thing.

Mary's shock and enthusiasm at winning the ARS Bronze Award pleased everyone attending.



*"So, what do you think Laurie; should we offer to host the Summer Picnic in June 2022, maybe?"*

*That COVID virus thing that we don't know about yet, that will stop us all for a couple of years, should be over by then. You know, just planning ahead . . ."*



*"Sure, why not? Go for it, Laurie!"*



## Elisabeth Hosts the June 2019 Summer Picnic



Friends settle with delightful food in intimate garden rooms overlooking Quamichan Lake and fall into easy chatter.

A lovely setting for Barrie to lead laid-back CVRS members through the AGM





# *The Beauty of Camelot Ridge Garden*

Created by  
*Don and Louise*



*Rhododendron 'Flaming Star'*





A comment from one of the tour guests, several days after the Open Garden:

*"I just can't get Camelot Ridge out of my mind. It was stunning!"*



Garden Tours are treasured 'soul' experiences of Nature's beauty, artist expression, education, generosity, and lovely friendships.

*Thank-you Don and Louise, for the re-fill of all the above!*



# *The Plant Passions of Malcolm Ho-You*

Open Garden Showcases Peonies and Irises



Malcolm's Hot Composter



A New Brilliant Yellow Peony



Crinkled foliage of G F Hemrick



Malcolm's 2022 Prize Peony 'Pastelegance'



Iris 'Babu'



# *Ocean Caressed Gardens*

*of Dorothy and Randy*



Ocean-touched and lovingly nurtured by Dorothy and Randy, the mature gardens surrounding their lovely home are verdant and lush.

A rich collection of unique plants interlaced in magical tapestries



Dorothy and a friend transformed a set of stone steps, leading to nowhere, into a broad stone staircase to reach new levels – a richly planted terrace previously overlooked.





# Mountain-top Haven

Created by  
Carrie and Richard



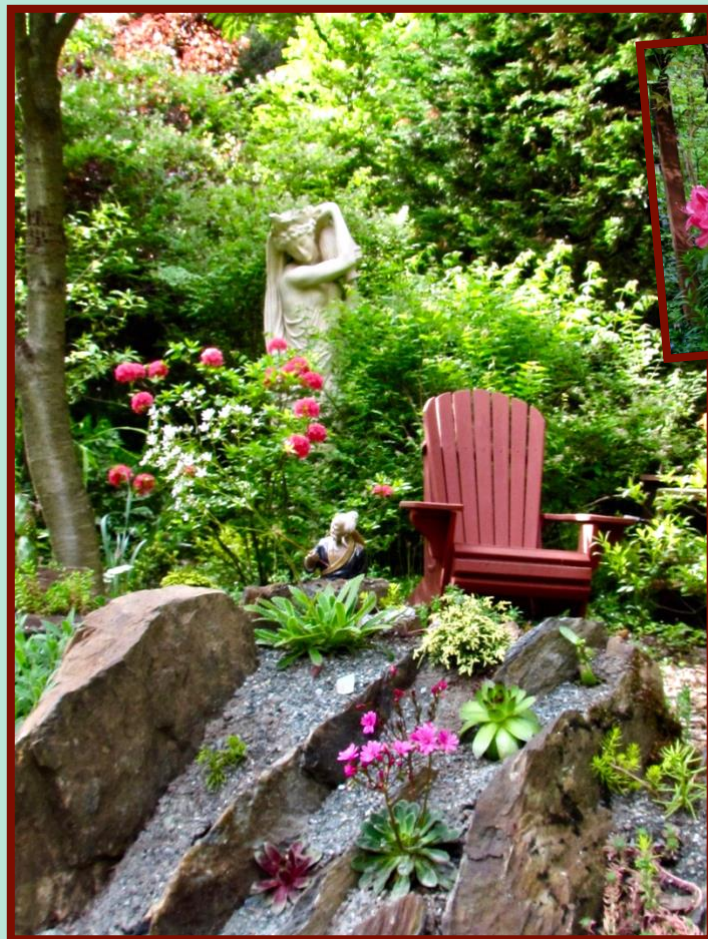
A haven of unique tree and plant collections, terraces, and artistically presented foliage views

*Acer palmatum* 'Yasemin'; a rhododendron with dark indumentum and soft fawn new growth; *Magnolia sieboldii*; *Styrax obassia*; a rhododendron with bold foliage beneath a lacy maple; a near-black rhododendron



# Well-Kept Secret Garden

Created and Kept Secret by  
*Janice and Laurie*



Along every trail, around every bend,  
secret evening delights abound







**2021 – 2022**

## **Calendar of Events**

Contact CVRS:

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

## **~~~~ UPCOMING EVENTS ~~~~**

### **CVRS SUMMER PICNIC and ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Sunday, June 26, 2022 11am – 3pm**

**3474 Kingburn Drive, Cobble Hill, B.C.**

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### **NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY EVENTS**

**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:

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

Vancouver Island Rock and Garden Society:

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

Linda Chalker-Scott:

<https://puvallup.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>

### 2021-2022 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: Vacant  
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  
Newsletter: Verna Buhler