

Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society



Newsletter

Volume 34:2 March 2023

Message from the President

Dear Friends,

Greetings from the more wintry realms of Salmon Arm, where I am currently supporting family. Temperatures are reliably below 0 C; in fact, it is -15C today; and flurries happen on a regular basis. However, the scenery in this region is lovely. It may be some time before Spring pushes aside Winter and the flowers are brave enough to stand up to the frosts; but here, when the sun begins to warm, plant growth is instantaneous, and the landscape rapidly transforms.

On Vancouver Island, this is a perfect time to divide plants and pot up a few for the ever-popular CVRS Annual Plant Sale. We do depend on your generosity and are always proud of the quality and variety of special plants that our members share.

Please do what you usually do and recall how satisfying it feels to see friends and neighbors in our community pressing the gates to purchase the plants you are sharing with them.

Thank-you so much,
Barrie Agar



Pulmonaria

CVRS
March Meeting

Wednesday, March 1, 2023
7:30 pm

Glen Jamieson

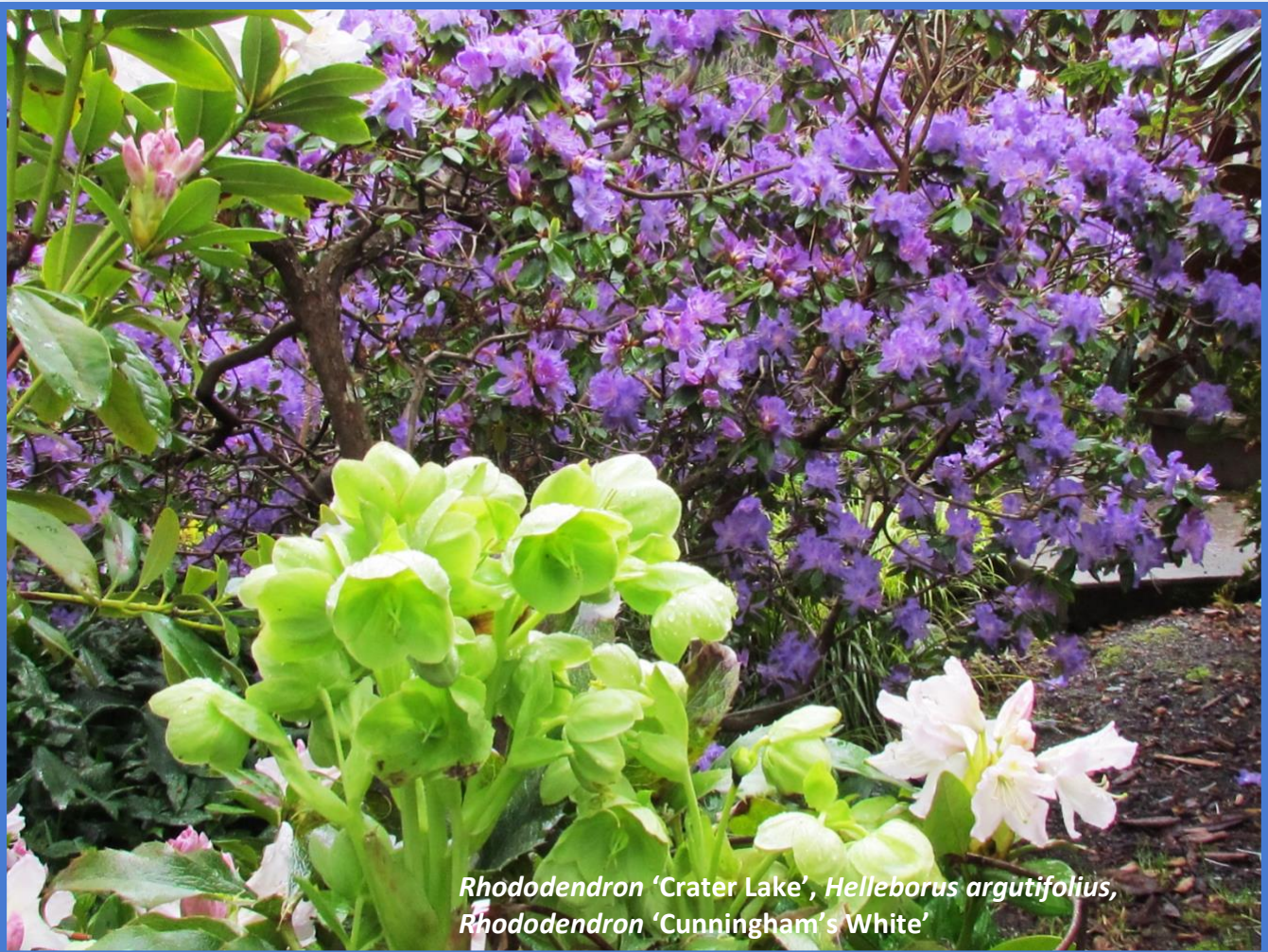
*Iceland -
Land of Ice and Fire*

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Banner Photo:

A Barlup hybrid labelled as *Rhododendron* 'Early Winters'. However, this does not match the Jim Barlup photos; it is perhaps *R. 'Winter Dreams'* or *R. 'Moe's Journey'*



*Rhododendron 'Crater Lake', Helleborus argutifolius,
Rhododendron 'Cunningham's White'*



Hepatica nobilis



Brunnera macrophylla 'Jack Frost'

Looking forward to the Brilliant Hues of Spring Blues



*Rhododendron 'Blue Baron' (blue), R 'Cheer' and R.
'Bubblegum' (pink), R. 'Patty Bee' (yellow), bordered
by Heather and the new growth of a Peony*



ICELAND – Land of Ice and Fire

GUEST SPEAKER GLEN JAMIESON

Dr. Glen Jamieson has a B.Sc. in Agriculture from McGill University and a M.Sc. and Ph.D. in Zoology from University of British Columbia. He worked for Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) as a research scientist for 31 years, both in the Maritimes (5 years) and at the Pacific Biological Station in Nanaimo, B.C. (26 years)

He retired from DFO in 2008 and became editor of the Journal of the American Rhododendron Society in 2009. Earlier, in 1995, he had joined the American Rhododendron Society. He also explored for plants in Yunnan, China; Borneo (2008); Ecuador and Peru (7 trips between 1998 and 2014); and in Sikkim, India (1995). He has travelled to over seventy countries.



He lives in Parksville with his wife Dorothy, where they maintain a garden that is periodically on the garden tour of the local ARS chapter, Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society (MARS). He has an extensive *vireya* collection that is possibly the largest in Canada.

As well as serving as the editor of *JARS*, he also created the online journal of *Rhododendrons International*.



Atlantic puffin

Iceland, the Nordic most sparsely populated European country, has become a very popular tourist destination in recent years. For two weeks in June 2022, Dorothy and I circumnavigated the island by car, visiting all the main tourist sites and many interesting remote locations. This presentation will showcase our travels, illustrating the country's history, scenery, communities, biodiversity, rhododendron gardening, and food.

Geologically one of the most active countries in the world, the island of Iceland is the only location above sea level on the Mid-Atlantic Rift, a long valley on the Mid-Atlantic Ridge that is about 50 to 75 miles (80 to 120 kilometers) wide. This rift contains the zone of seafloor spreading at an estimated rate of 1 to 10 centimeters (0.5 to 4 inches) per year, in which molten magma from beneath Earth's crust continuously wells up, cools, and is progressively pushed away from the ridge's flanks.



Sea Stacks, Arnarstapi, West Iceland



Waterfall, Westjord

Letter from the Editor

Happy March, Dear Friends!

There is something about the word 'March' that triggers a prodding for attitude change in me. "It is time you stop reading and dreaming and start doing!" The nudging at my conscience begins from the moment my eyes open each morning. "March is coming! You better begin *marching*! Nudges rise to a sense of urgency: "Why didn't I get going sooner?"

In the Northern Hemisphere, the *meteorological* beginning of spring occurs on the first day of March. The March Equinox marks the *astronomical* beginning of spring in the Northern Hemisphere. For me, it marks the beginning of the garden *march* – the time to begin ticking off the items on that long list of Spring tasks. Quite a few of them could have been done in February – but no - it was so nice to rest.

By noon on Sunday, January 29th, I was happy that I had decided to pass on my regular Sunday morning hike with friends to attend a Zoom presentation by Ralph Bauer from Germany on the topic of *Rhododendron minus* Complex. A short article in this issue covers a bit of the information that Ralph Bauer presented about his exploration through the regions of natural populations of the *Rhododendron minus* Complex to determine more specific classifications.

As you are looking for new rhododendrons you may be considering down a search for rhododendrons to add to your garden. They may be on species: *large-leaved species*; or on lepidotes: *trifloral*; or on hybrids by specific hybridizers such as *Barlup*, among others.



R. carolinianum – Hawksbill Mt., NC

My garden is filling up and I know that *dwarf rhododendrons* would be a wise theme for me to adopt this year. One theme that you will find in this newsletter is that of *Pacific Northwest place names*. We sometimes feel special connections to plants that are named after some of our favourite local places.

One important message this month is the request for plant contributions from your personal gardens. If you can part with some divisions of your plants this spring, the CVRS Executive planning the Annual Plant Sale would be most grateful. Thank-you in advance.

If you are not planning a trip to Iceland next month, you can enjoy an imaginary trip to this country by attending the presentation at our March meeting. It will be fascinating.

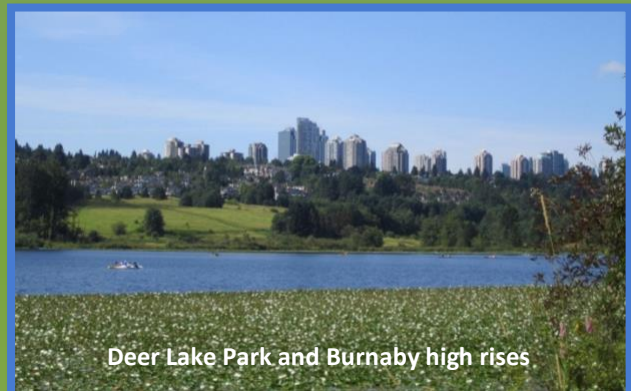
Verna

Pacific Northwest Place-Name Rhododendrons

Rhododendron 'Burnaby Beauty' *Named but unregistered by hybridizer, Les Clay*



Burnaby is a city in the Lower Mainland of BC located next to Vancouver in the center of the Burrard Peninsula, where hybridizer Les Clay first began his work with rhododendrons



Rhododendron 'Chemainus'



Chemainus is a picturesque artisan village nestled between the mountains and the ocean directly on the Cowichan coast. It is known as "The Little Town That Did".



***Rhododendron* Courtenay Five:**

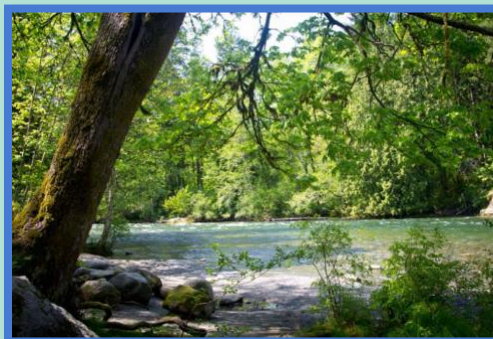
***R.* 'Courtenay King', *R.* 'Courtenay Queen', *R.* 'Courtenay Lady', *R.* 'Courtenay Duke', *R.* 'Courtenay Princess'**



***Rhododendron* 'Courtenay Queen'**

Photo: Harry Wright

Courtenay is a growing urban and cultural hub of the Comox Valley on the East coast of Vancouver Island; it is surrounded by supernatural beauty. It was the home of Harry Wright, the hybridizer of the Courtenay Five rhododendrons.



***Rhododendron* 'Cowichan'**

Named but not registered

Peter Kearns, a former member of the CVRS, collected seed from *Rhododendron williamsianum* growing in fellow member, Daphne Jackson's, garden. He raised many seedlings of this "bumblebee hybrid". Fred Collins, another CVRS member selected the best form and christened it *Rhododendron* 'Cowichan' but did not go on to register it. Several years ago, Allen Campbell attempted to register *R.* 'Cowichan', but experienced too many obstacles, at that time, to complete the registration. This lovely plant adequately reflects our spectacular **Cowichan Valley**, "Canada's Provence".



***Rhododendron* 'Crater Lake'**



Crater Lake, the deepest lake in America, situated in the Cascade Mountains in southern Oregon, was formed by the eruption and collapse of Mt. Mazama.



***Rhododendron* 'Langley Tranquility'**

Hybridized by Les Clay but not registered

A tidy, compact plant with dark green, curly leaves with lovely multi-coloured blooms. Parentage is *R.* 'Graf Zeppelin' x *R.* 'King of Shrubs'. It is hardy to -15C.



Langley is a lovely rural community of agricultural activity in the Fraser Valley. It also has a secret 3.67acre botanical garden, Sendall Gardens, with unique plants, shrubs and trees and winding trails, duck pond, and a gazebo nestled in a tranquil setting.

***Rhododendron* 'Malahat'**

Hybridized by H. L. Larson of Tacoma, with *R. griffithianum* parentage.



Photo: Lloyd Newcomb

Malahat Mountain, situated between Victoria and Mill Bay is considered one of the most sacred sites on southern Vancouver Island. The ancestors of the Malahat First Nation used the caves for spiritual enhancement. The Malahat Drive offers spectacular views from the summit at 365m (1168 ft.)



Photo: vancouverisland.com

***Rhododendron* 'Puget Sound'**

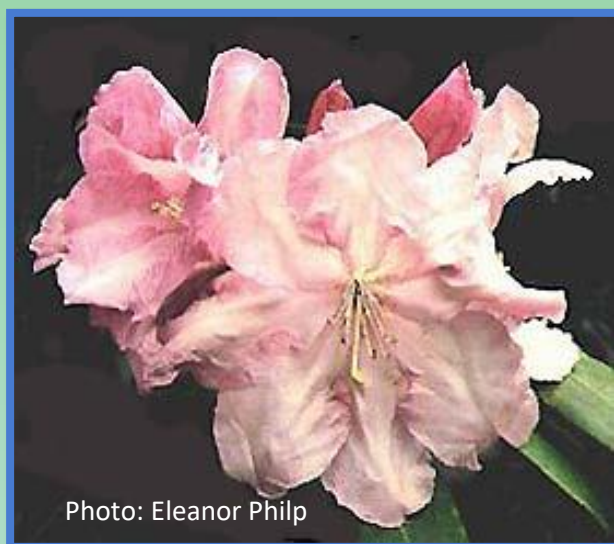


Photo: Eleanor Philp

Puget Sound is a sound or inlet of the Pacific Ocean, approximately 100 miles (160 km) in length. It is part of the Salish Sea, off the northwestern coast of Washington.



Mt. Ranier, from Gig Harbour on Puget Sound
Photo: Wikipedia

***Rhododendron* 'Tofino'**

Hybridized by Jack Lofthouse using *R.* 'Lem's Cameo' as a seed parent.



Photo: Bill Stipe

Tofino is a small district on Vancouver Island, off Canada's west coast. "It sprawls on a peninsula within Clayoquot Sound, characterized by wild natural scenery, including lakes, inlets, and ancient forests."



Photo credit: Tripadvisor

***Rhododendron* 'Whidbey Island'**

R. niveum x *R. rex*

Hybridized by Ann and Max Meerkerk



Photo: Bill Stipe

Whidbey Island is the largest of the islands composing Island County, Washington. It is about 30 miles (48 km) north of Seattle and forms the northern boundary of Puget Sound. The Meerkerks donated their stunning garden on Whidbey Island to the Seattle Rhododendron Society.



Photo credit: Meerkerk Gardens

Other Pacific Northwest Place-Name Rhododendrons

Rhododendron 'Burnaby Centennial'

Rhododendron 'Haida Gold'

Rhododendron 'Olympic Lady' (now known as Olympic Lady Group)

Rhododendron 'Sammamish'

Rhododendron 'Seattle Gold'

* If you know of other Pacific Northwest place-name rhododendrons, I would love to hear from you!

Thank-you,

Verna Buhler (Editor)

Feisty Rhododendrons Blooming in February

Rhododendron 'Olive'

Very Early Blooming Rhododendron



Photo: Madeleine Webb



Photo: Garth Wedemire

Rhododendron 'Olive'

...blooms happily in February in Madeleine and Ken Webb's garden in Saanich, B.C. Each truss has one to two flowers, approximately 1½ inches across.

The plant grows upright, and can become leggy, but surrounded as it is with other rhododendrons in the Webb's garden, with a hardiness of -26C (-15F), it is simply magical in February.

***Rhododendron* 'Coral Glow'**

Very Early Blooming Rhododendron



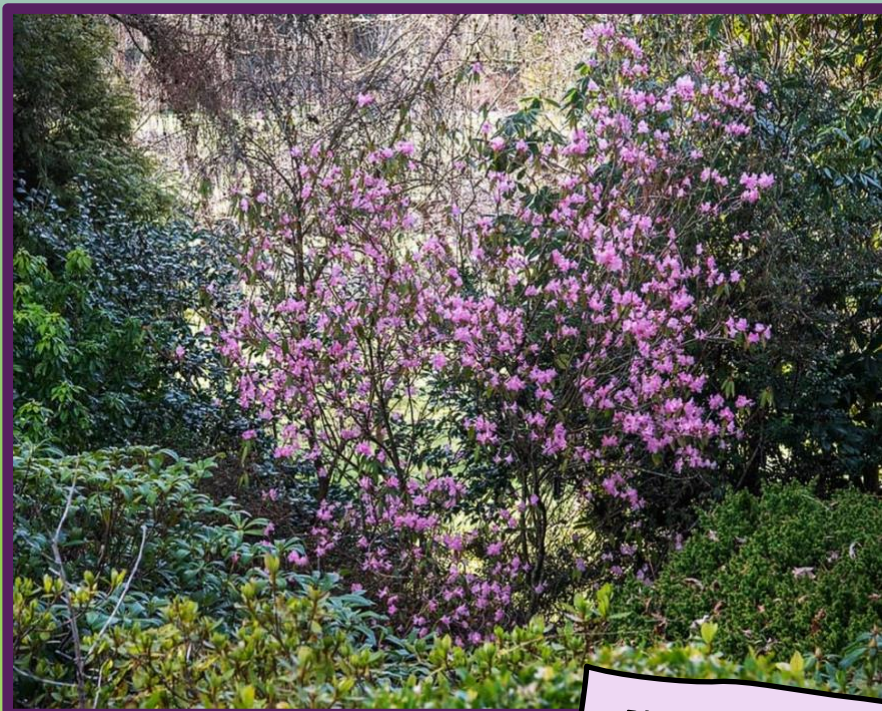
Photo: Harry Wright

***Rhododendron* 'Coral Glow'**

...blooms in early mid-season. It has a broadly upright habit and grows to 4 ft. in 10 years. Its flowers are widely funnel-shaped, single, 1½" to 2" across. The vivid reddish-orange-to-strong-yellowish-pink flowers are slightly fragrant. Each truss holds 2-3 flowers. Leaves are 4" to 4¾" long and turn a mahogany color in autumn.

It is hardy to -26 C (-15°F)

Hybridized by Mehlquist, it is a cross between *R. mucronulatum* 'Cornell Pink' and *R. lutescens*.

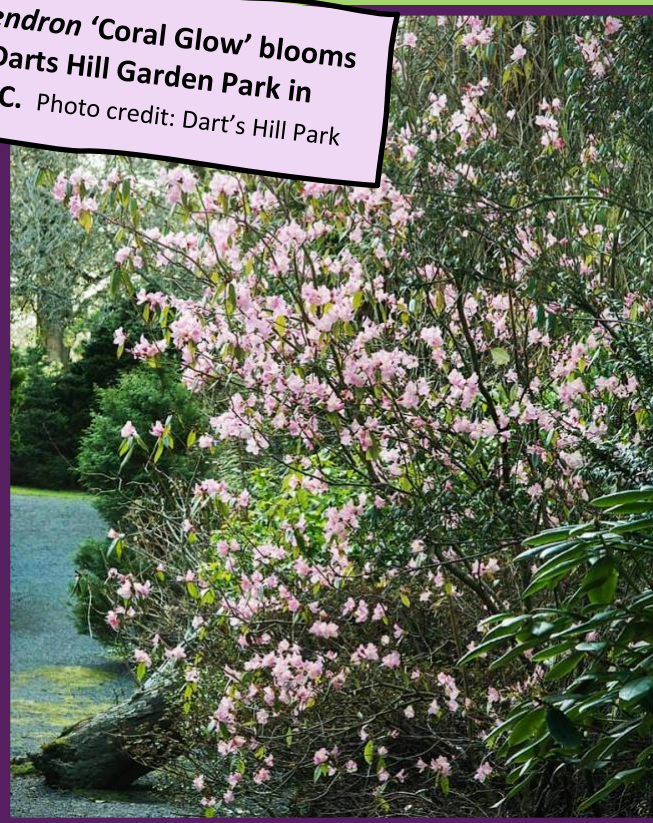


***Rhododendron* 'Coral Glow' blooms early in Darts Hill Garden Park in Surrey B.C.** Photo credit: Dart's Hill Park



In a sheltered spot in my garden, in this last week of February, the buds of *R. 'Coral Glow'* are swelling, preparing to accommodate hovering hummingbirds sensing the promise of fresh nectar.

~ Verna



The *Rhododendron minus* Complex

Ralph Bauer Presentation

On January 29, 2023, Pontomac Valley Chapter ARS hosted a Zoom presentation by Ralph Bauer from Germany in which he explained, using maps and photos, the differences between several of the *Rhododendron minus* species growing in various regions of Southeastern United States. It was an informative presentation, and with these brief notes, I hope to share some of his significant findings during his travels through the regions.



Ralph Bauer of Germany

~ Verna Buhler



Very long throats on *Rhododendron minus* nearer the ocean in Alabama



Rhododendron carolinianum in Broad River, South Carolina Photo: Ralph Bauer



R. chapmanii - Port St. Joe, FL
Photo: R. Bauer

For some time, there has been confusing information in the discussion of noted variations in characteristics of the plants growing in different regions of the Southeastern United States that were grouped within the broader category of *Rhododendron minus*, the small leaved lepidote rhododendron species. Ralph Bauer has been travelling and studying these variations to determine a distinction of species. Some of the significant differences he noted were the length of the flower tubes. In regions near the ocean, the lengths of the flower tubes are the longest; they are the shortest inland in the mountains. He gathered data on the *Rhododendrons minus*, *R. carolinianum* and the *R. chapmanii* to assess whether these might deserve status as distinctive species.

In Alabama, *Magnolias*, mountain laurels and *R. minus*, with very long throats and sometimes blotches, bloom together, growing on very steep slopes above the rivers.

In South In South Carolina, *R. minus* grows on hot sandy hillsides that are frequented by fires. The rhododendrons recover quickly and grow taller. Insects are attracted to the large open, flatter, white blooms blooming in mid-April.

Rhododendron carolinianum has wide open flat blooms with very short throat tubes. It blooms before mountain laurel and prefers cooler winters. It requires very good drainage. In Snooks Noose, NC, it blooms in early May together with trillium, creating expanses of spectacular beauty.



Rhododendron minus on Mt. Toxaway,
North Carolina Photo: Ralph Bauer

In the Toxaway Mountains of the South Carolina regions, *Rhododendron minus* blooms in June. The flowers have shorter tubes, and bloom in all shades of purple.

One of the former *Rhododendron minus* Complex has been tested and determined to have unique characteristics earning the classification of a new species, *Rhododendron smokianum*. It is a narrow endemic from the Great Smoky Mountains of Tennessee and North Carolina, growing on steep mafic rock slopes. It can grow on anakeesta rock which is high in heavy metals. On surfaces destroyed by landslides, it is the first to re-establish.

***Rhododendron smokianum* - The “Jump Off” in the Smokies, TN** Photo: R. Bauer



COWICHAN VALLEY RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

PLANT SALE

Saturday, MAY 13, 2023, 10am – 2pm

Plants and Volunteers Deeply Appreciated



Announcing . . .

Vancouver Island Rock and Alpine Garden Society's Annual Spring Show and Sale, 2023



Erythronium tuolumnense - Beacon Hill Park

Photo - Sue Lee

April 21 and 22
Lambrick Park Church
1780 Feltham Road
Victoria, BC

Watch for more details, or visit our website www.virags.com
On Facebook: @vancouver island rock and alpine garden society
Instagram: @virags_pics

Nature's Beauty

in March Gardens





CVRS PLANT SALE – WANTED! PLANTS!

It's that time again, when we encourage all our members to pot up divisions of their favourite plants to donate to the **CVRS Plant Sale**.

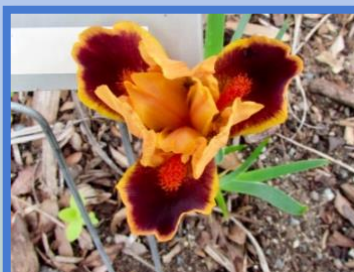
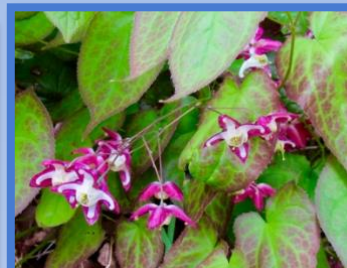
The earlier the plants are potted, the more well-rooted they become; they will then look wonderful by mid-May!

If everyone contributes 5 plants, we will once again be able to fill our sales tables with the special plants that our community appreciates.

At this time of the year, you may think you don't have those interesting plants, but in a short while, those plants will excite you as they do every year. No doubt, they would excite others as well.

Gentian, Ferns, Hellebores, Epimediums, Dwarf Irises, Heuchera, Lilies, Hostas, Peonies, Primulas, Euphorbia, Anemones, are just a few among so many more!

Please check to make sure your varieties are well behaved rather than invasive.



THANK-YOU SO MUCH FOR ALL YOUR GENEROSITY AND SUPPORT!

2022 – 2023

Calendar of Events

Contact CVRS:

cowichanvalleyrhododendron@gmail.com

Wednesday, March 1, 7:30 pm
CVRS Monthly Meeting
Glen Jamieson: *Trip to Iceland*

Wednesday, March 8, 7:30pm
MARS Monthly Meeting (QB Civic Center)
Round Table Discussion: *Plant Culture*

Thursday March 9, 7:30pm
NRS Monthly Meeting (Beban Park Social Center, Nanaimo)
Scott Wiskerke: *Pruning Rhododendrons*

Saturday, March 18, TBA
NRS Monthly Meeting (Chris Southwick's Garden)
Scott Wiskerke: *Pruning Demonstration*

Wednesday, April 12 7:30pm
MARS Monthly Meeting (QB Civic Center)
Paul Spriggs: *The Art of Rock and Crevice Gardening*

Thursday, April 13, 7:30pm
NRS Monthly Meeting (Beban Park Social Center)
John Deniseger: *Why I Grow Rhododendrons*

April 19 – 23, 2023:
American Rhododendron Society Spring Convention, Atlanta, Georgia.

April 21 – 22, 2023:
Vancouver Island Rock and Alpine Garden Society
Annual Spring Show and Sale
(Lambrick Park Church, Victoria)

Saturday, April 22, 10am – 2pm
MARS Rhododendron Show and Plant Sale
Qualicum Beach Curling Club

Wednesday, May 10, 7:30pm
MARS Monthly Meeting (QB Civic Center)
Margot Moser: *Ferns*

Thursday, May 11, 7:30pm
NRS Monthly Meeting (Beban Park Social Center)
Garth Wedemire: *Finnerty Gardens Gems Over the Last Decade*

SATURDAY, MAY 13, 2023, 10 AM – 2PM

COWICHAN VALLEY RHODODENDRON SOCIETY
ANNUAL PLANT SALE
Venue: TBA



May 13 & 14, 2023 10am – 4pm on Sat and Sun
MARS Mothers' Day Garden Tour

Sunday, June 4, 2023
Cowichan Family Life Association Garden Tour

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY EVENTS

April 19 – 23, 2023:
American Rhododendron Society Spring Convention, Atlanta, Georgia.



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

Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden:

rhodygarden.org

Nanoose Garden Club:

nanoosegardenclub.ca/

Linda Gilkeson:

lindagilkeson.ca/

Vancouver Island Rock and Garden Society:

virags.com

Linda Chalker-Scott:

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

Steve Henning:

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>

2022-2023 Executive

President: Barrie Agar
Vice-President: Dorothy Kennedy
Treasurer: Diane Allen
Secretary: Mary Pike
Director-at-Large: Wendy Willson
Director-at-Large: Candice Feeney
Director-at-Large: Sandy Campbell
Director-at-Large: Ali Morris
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