



# Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society

Newsletter

Volume 32:4 May 2021

## Message from the President



Hi Friends,

There is really nothing that needs to be added to a President's Message if it begins with a stunning photo such as this species *Rhododendron dendrocharis*, charming with grace and florescence in an aging stump. Sean Rafferty, the President of the Rhododendron Species Foundation\* in Federal Way, Washington, submitted this photograph of the species blooming in his oceanside garden in Shirley, B.C.

(continued on page 2)

May 5, 2021, 7pm

CVRS Zoom Meeting:

John Brimacombe

*"Subtropical Gardening  
Using Rhododendrons and  
Associated Plants" 3*

Companion Plant for May 4

Evelyn Weesjes 6

CVRS Member Garden  
Tours 19

Upcoming Events 35

***\*The Rhododendron  
Species Foundation is a  
non-profit organization  
dedicated to the  
conservation, research,  
acquisition, evaluation,  
cultivation, public  
display, and distribution  
of Rhododendron  
species.***

## President's Message continued. . .

If you have never heard of, nor visited, the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden this may be the first trip to plan when borders are once again safely open for travel. I, for one, can hardly wait.

*My plans for this edition of the newsletter completely changed when the photos from you poured in this week. Clearly, this May issue was meant to be a Virtual Garden Tour experience. What better than this for the garden-month of May. How magically Nature continues to arouse our spirits with more surprises each day.*

Interesting events are coming up. We will be attempting to hold a CVRS Plant Sale; the success of other organizations encourages us see that people in our communities are eager to buy plants, and the cooler weather extends the optimal planting season. We will continue to sell plants through notifications online; however, we are waiting until May 25<sup>th</sup> in adherence to COVID restrictions, to determine whether or not we may invite you, and members of the community, to in-person plant sales.

It seems much too often that, with sadness, we dedicate a section of our newsletters to honour incredible people from our community who have suddenly left us. Evelyn Weesjes contributed much to the rhododendron community, and if you never had the special pleasure of meeting her, you have an opportunity here to read about a notable woman.

So, as we continue to meet during Zoom meetings, or distantly wave or chat across fences or shrubs, it is comforting to know that we are doing our individual and collective parts, keeping everyone healthy and each other's spirits up.

*Thank-you, eager rhododendron enthusiasts and gardening friends, who flooded my email with fantastic photos of colourful displays in your April/May gardens! If your photos are not included in this issue, it is only because of timing; they will be in the June issue.*

*Our gardens afford hours of personal enjoyment and by sharing we provide snapshots of what we may look forward to when we can, once again, visit and stroll through each other's reposeful spaces. Until then. . .*

Verna



**Rhododendron 'Patty Bee'**  
Photo: Verna Buhler



# John Brimacombe

*“Subtropical Gardening Using Rhododendrons and Associated Plants”*

CVRS May 5, 2021, 7pm Zoom Meeting



Photo of John's garden, obtained from Pacific Northwest Palm and Exotic Plant Society Facebook page

**John Brimacombe** is a retired physics teacher who has been dabbling in Mediterranean style gardening for over 30 years and has been President of the Pacific Northwest Palm & Exotic Plant Society for 8 years. He is also been the coordinating editor of the journal *Hardy Palm International* since 2008.

*His wide ranging Powerpoint presentation deals with the practical use of hardy palms and other exotics such as hardy succulents, citrus, and eucalyptus trees, to create Mediterranean or subtropical style gardens outdoors in BC and the Pacific Northwest (USDA 7b - 9). Many Rhododendrons will fit into this style of gardening.*

*John Brimacombe is the Society's long-time president and palm enthusiast for over 30 years. In addition to the presentation, John will be bringing a wealth of information on palm care, including cold protection techniques, some of which could be applied to other tender trees and shrubs within our gardens.*

## **Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden Species Symposium (Virtual/Zoom)**

**Friday, June 25 to Sunday, June 27**



# Companion Plant of the Month

By Ali Morris

*Podophyllum* is a fabulous foliage plant, especially *Podophyllum* 'Spotty Dotty'; it never fails to animate any visitor to my garden.

*Podophyllum* includes over a dozen species, almost all of which are endemic to eastern Asia.

***Podophyllum* 'Spotty Dotty,'** a hybrid, with its reddish spots and velvety sheen, is spectacular, almost tropical looking. To the best of my knowledge, the plant is still patent protected, hence the high price in nurseries.



***Podophyllum pleianthum*,** a species native to China and Taiwan, has been a favourite of mine ever since I spotted one in a friend's garden. The foliage has serrated edges and it looks like it's been dipped in wax.

Many clones of this species are available; one thing they all have in common is that the flowers will only set on a stem with twin leaves. The red globular flowers dangle underneath the foliage, a great contrast from the green stem.

This plant is best grown in rich humus soil in shade; however, it also looks stunning in a planter.



***Podophyllum pleianthum***

## ***Podophyllum hexandrum chinensis***

This variety comes from the Himalayan mountains. Again, there is quite a variability within the species.

I grow two different varieties. The foliage emerges like a folded umbrella, with the flowers on top. When the fruit begins to grow, the weight of it will make it hang underneath the foliage.

The main attraction for me is the brilliant red fruit, which hangs on until the very end of summer.

Then it offers a lovely surprise in Spring, when lots of seedlings begin to sprout. (Editor's Note: If you would like some seeds or a seedling, feel free to ask Ali. The parent plant, of course, expects that Ali has a thorough 'new-homes' screening process)



The other *P. hexandrum* I grow, also bears the fire engine red fruit; in addition, this one displays rich autumn colour.

All these plants are best grown in rich moisture-retentive soil in shade or semi shade, as in its natural habitat the plant is found in forests, meadows, and moist, shaded slopes in the altitudinal range of 2600-4500 metres.

It is known to thrive well as undergrowth in the fir forests rich in humus and decaying organic matter in the subalpine region. The associated species are *Juniperus*, *Rhododendron*, *Salix* and *Viburnum*. It is less frequent in open alpine meadows. It usually grows in protected places at the foot of the slope or between rocks and boulders, particularly in sites that offer deep soil and a steady water supply.



### MILL BAY PLANTAHOLICS: Noteworthy Garden Effort

*Many of you are aware of this most recent fundraising success in the Cowichan Valley; it deserves expressions of appreciation from the Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society. Elaine Scott summarizes the results of this effort.*

*Well, everyone. . .*

*On behalf of the Mill Bay Plantaholics (Sharon Martin, Noreen Carver, Ali Morris, Barb Kohlman, Louise Neveau, Lynne Testemale and me) I am pleased to advise you that we had a very successful plant sale and were able to write a cheque to each of the two charities for \$4,200 giving a total of money distributed of \$8,400. This amount includes donations provided by several of you plus the income from the garden novelties made by Don Loewen and Wes Heinrichs. This is far in excess of our normal revenue and we thank each and every one of you for your support.*

*We will let you know the date of next year's sale well in advance. This was a learning experience for us, and we know that there were some mistakes made but we hope that you will forgive us. We have already determined adjustments we will need to make for next year.*

*Thank you one and all,*

*Elaine Scott*



# *Evelyn Weesjes*

## **In Memory of a Special Woman**

**October 17th, 1928 - April 16th, 2021**

*Much has been written about Evelyn Weesjes, and in this issue, we will reprint a number of these articles, in whole, or in part where descriptions overlap. Those who knew her well are best able to express the qualities of this determined modest leader and role model.*

*Thank you to Alan Campbell and Bill Dale for most of the words that are used here in honour of Evelyn Weesjes*

**Evelyn Weesjes, (nee Jack) passed away April 16, 2021 on her own terms; sitting on her sunny patio looking at bouquets of her rhododendrons and the garden beyond.**

**She was a beloved plants woman, selfless and generous, who was always glad to share her vast knowledge of plants. She received her horticultural degree at UBC in 1954 and not long afterward worked for 28 years in the UBC Botanical Gardens. While there, Evelyn was instrumental in the propagation and growing on of the original stock material that formed the basis for the Rhododendron Species Foundation in Federal Way Washington.**

**In 1970, Evelyn received the American Rhododendron Society's Gold Medal Award for her contributions to the genus rhododendron**

### ***Times Colonist, Victoria***

*. . . It is due to Evelyn's dedication and expertise there are now many plants in gardens throughout Victoria and North Saanich. Fiercely independent and self-reliant, she continued to maintain the garden after Nick passed in 2011. During this time Evelyn also became an expert grower and propagator of many species of ferns . . .*

*She was predeceased by brothers, Dave, Doug and Ernest and is survived by niece Lindsay and family, and sister-in-law Flo of Saltspring Island.*

*Evelyn's legacy is that Towner Crest will continue under new ownership.*



## The Weesjes/Larson Connection

by Alan Campbell

*This article was first published in the November 2006 Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society Newsletter, and again in the June 2019 issue. It is reprinted by permission.*

*The photos were taken in Evelyn Weesjes' garden in May 2019, by Verna Buhler.*

**The University of British Columbia knew talent when it saw it.** Evelyn Jack received her degree in horticulture in 1954 and was immediately hired by the university into its horticultural program. Three years earlier, the university had hired a young man newly emigrated from Holland and employed him in its burgeoning Botanical Garden. The young man was Nick Weesjes, and he was elevated to head gardener in 1955. The next 25 years saw Evelyn Jack and Nick Weesjes increase the prominence of the genus *Rhododendron* in Eastern Canada and the Pacific Northwest area of the United States, and, as well, the breadth and depth of the UBC campus gardens. During the ensuing 25 years, three relationships developed which would enhance the gardening pleasures of the growing number of rhododendron enthusiasts in British Columbia.



Though I have mentioned in an earlier article, the relationship that grew between UBC and the newly formed Rhododendron Species Foundation at Federal Way, Washington, I would like to expand slightly on that subject. In 1964, Dr. Milton Walker of the Foundation and Mary Greig approached UBC concerning U.S. import regulations, which disallowed the Foundation to bring plant material

directly from Britain to the U.S. I should clarify here that even though plant material could not go directly from Britain to the States without being fumigated, effectively destroying the plant material as well as any parasites, British material could enter Canada and, by agreement, the States and Canada would allow plant material to cross the 49th parallel. It was another case of foreign elements using Canada as a stepping-stone into the United States.

Dr. Walker had amassed a large amount of cutting material and seed from the best of British gardens, so much that UBC had to dedicate the task of propagating this material to a proficient individual. Evelyn Jack was that person. The agreement with the Foundation allowed UBC to keep for itself an example of each species that Evelyn propagated. These in turn were handed over to Nick Weesjes to add to the botanical garden on the campus grounds. It was from these introductions that Evelyn began to propagate additional plants to begin her own collection of rhododendron species.

The second relationship, which developed, fortunately for rhododendron growers, was also with a fellow from the Lower 48. Hjalmar Larson, a nurseryman in the Tacoma area, was no stranger to our province. During his annual fishing trips to Campbell River, he became acquainted with the Royston Nursery and established a friendship with Ted and Mary Greig. In 1954, Larson was invited to give a lecture on grafting at UBC, and through this event came to the attention of Evelyn Jack and Nick Weesjes. Sometime later, Ed Trayling, a rhododendron grower and hybridizer on the Lower Mainland, also a friend of Larson's, closed the loop by arranging a visit to the Tacoma nursery for Evelyn and Nick. From as early as the late 1940s, Larson had been receiving seeds of rhododendron species and cuttings of English hybrids from Britain. He had somehow managed to do this despite the import restrictions.

Not only was Hjalmar a nurseryman, he also entered the realm of hybridizer. Here again, the problems of too much product and not enough time and space became an issue. He needed the help of other competent growers and Evelyn was high on his list. Over time, she received the product of 40 hybrid crosses and grew on more than 1000 seedlings from them. Growing these seedlings on, painfully evaluating every single plant, and registering those deemed the best has resulted in some of the finest plants that we can grow in our gardens.



Being the astute readers that you are, the third relationship that I alluded to should be apparent by now. Few people can claim to be employed at an occupation that is also their source of enjoyment and their hobby. Nick and Evelyn were two of these, and while working alongside it was natural that their working relationship should evolve beyond the platonic. The Weesjes, upon reaching retirement age and leaving the employ of UBC in 1981, now directed their energies to their own dreams. Other than the four years between 1938 and 1942 when, as a young girl, she lived in Scotland, Evelyn had grown up in Victoria, her birthplace, so acquiring land and moving to the north end of the Saanich Peninsula was not an unexpected relocation. Here were 4 hectares of raw land, a diamond in the rough, and ready to be shaped and polished to reflect a dream.

**Towner Crest** began in 1982, and it took several years for the planting beds to take shape. The results of 20 years of collecting the best to come out of British gardens while working at UBC quickly filled beds with mature plants, while the assessing of hybrid seedlings filled even more. The main feature of the cultivated 3 hectares is rhododendrons in the natural setting of native conifers, but hardly the only feature. [Please keep in mind while you read, that this new undertaking was being done by a retired couple.] Other than the driveway and the house site, all work was done by hand. A few large-leaf maples and any dead or diseased conifers were removed; the remaining native flora was retained. This native flora included Douglas fir, grand fir, big-leaf maple, red alder, cascara, arbutus, and yew, as well as Oregon grape and sword fern for ground cover.

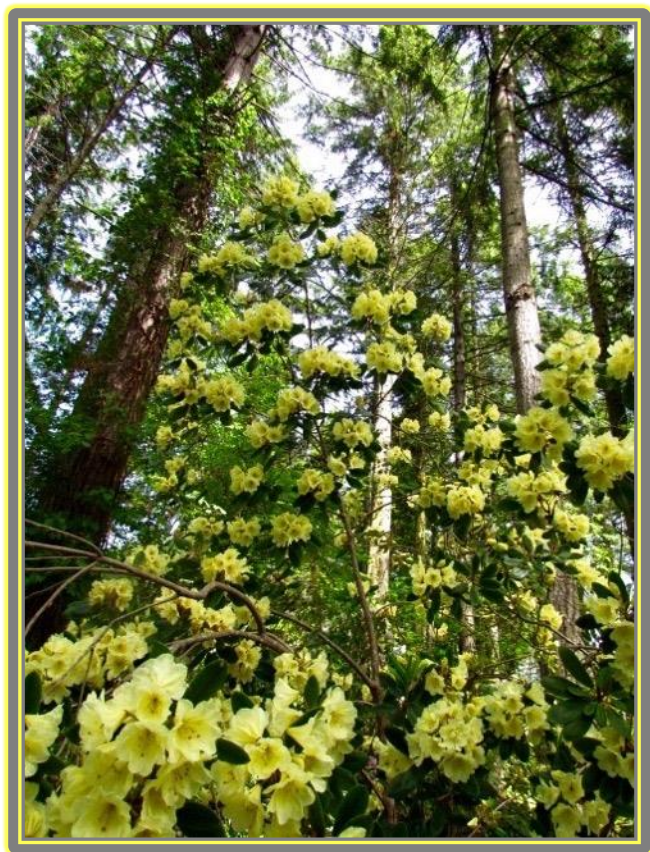
Nick also dug, by hand, a drainage ditch 60 cm deep by 30 cm wide to reroute excess water around the 4 hectares or toward a small creek running through the property, in effect making the property as a whole a raised bed. A maze-like watering system runs through the garden, giving each plant its own drip feed or micro



Evelyn Weesjes, enjoying the vibrancy of her garden creation in May 2019

spray, not just to the rhododendrons, but also to the hundreds of other trees, shrubs, hostas, and candelabra primulas that make up the more than 3000 plants currently planted out.

It will have become apparent to you that in designating Vancouver Island hybrids, I am being liberal, geographically speaking. The hybrid 'Malahat' ('Gill's Triumph'  $\times$  *R. strigillosum*) I can't include. This is a **Larson** hybrid produced and grown in his nursery at Tacoma; he just happened to name the plant after one of his favourite drives.



The same goes for 'Qualicum's Pride' ('Anna'  $\times$  'Cotton Candy'), a hybrid produced and raised by **Lloyd Newcomb** at his garden in Snohomish, Washington State. The plant was chosen from his garden and named by the Mount Arrowsmith Chapter to be its marquee plant at the ARS Western Regional Conference held in 1995 at the mid-Island community.

But when a stalwart of the local rhododendron community, **Dave Dougan**, raved about an unnamed hybrid that the Weesjes have grown from Larson seed and Evelyn named that hybrid 'Dave Dougan' (*R. yakushimanum*  $\times$  (*R. calophytum*  $\times$  'Grisette')) registered 1993,

that plant I just have to include. Evelyn said that she could see very little of *calophytum* in it, but that it was a nice, well-behaved *yak* hybrid.

Evelyn honoured another well-known Island rhododendron grower and historian by naming another of her Larson seedlings 'Bill Dale' (*R. yakushimanum*  $\times$  *R. strigillosum*) (1993). A sister seedling, 'Elze Weesjes', named for one of Nick's sisters, was registered in 1996. Two more of his sisters had rhododendrons named for them in 1994, appropriately enough, sister seedlings of *R. yakushimanum*  $\times$  'Mrs. Horace Fogg'. A well-known plantsman and member of the



Victoria Chapter lent his name to yet another Larson seedling, 'John Trelawny' ('Jutland × 'Fusilier') (1994). The next hybrid evaluated and found worthy of registering in 1995 was 'Gretha Rijksen' ('Kluis Sensation' × 'Fusilier'), once again named for a sister of Nick's. After much prodding from Evelyn, an excellent red *strigillosum* hybrid was named and registered by Ken and Dot Gibson of Tofino as 'Clayoquot Warrior' ('Essex Scarlet' × *R. strigillosum*) (1995).

The latest Larson seedling from the Weesjes garden to be evaluated and chosen [Editor's Note: in November 2006] is 'Lies Weesjes' (*R. yakushmanum* × 'Belvedere') (1998), named for yet another of Nick's sisters. Of all the Larson/Weesjes hybrids listed above, 'Clayoquot Warrior' is perhaps the one most available. The others have not been propagated as much, but I'm working on that.



Building a new garden from scratch, growing on and evaluating 1000+ seedlings of Hjalmar Larson's crossings must have kept Evelyn busy, but she did find the time to demonstrate her own aesthetic nature. Her keen eye and artistry are evident in the hybrids 'Nick's Choice' and 'Towner Crest', sister seedlings of 'Van Nes Sensation' × 'Mrs. Horace Fogg', both registered in 1995. Both of these plants growing in our garden have set buds and will bloom next spring.

**Herman Vaartnou** of Victoria, of whom I will speak more next month, [Editor's Note: in December 2006] was honoured by Evelyn with the naming of her hybrid 'Dr. Herman Vaartnou' (*R. macabeum* × unnamed *R. lacteum* hybrid) (1996). Originally the *lacteum* was received by Evelyn in one of the seed shipments from Britain as species seed, but as the seed grew and matured it just didn't seem to key out to the true species. She expects the seed was the product of naturally-occurring hybridization, which is why she calls the cross as being from "an unnamed *R. lacteum* hybrid". I have yet to get cutting material of 'Dr. Herman Vaartnou', but I have managed to obtain cuttings of the *lacteum* hybrid as it is also a fine plant. Evelyn has intimated that there are many more unnamed hybrids planted out amongst her gems. That teaser intrigues me to no end!

The locals, as well as informed others, seem to use the Weesjes garden as a semi-private park, coming and going as whimsy takes them, and Nick and Evelyn are more than generous in sharing their Eden with those who take pleasure from it. *[Editor's Note: Although Nick passed, Evelyn continued this open garden practice]* In conversation with Evelyn, she asked that I mention her and Nick less and their garden more, but the garden is them. The garden expresses their expectations, knowledge, drive and commitment much more than any conversation would draw from this quiet and self-effacing couple.

**What the garden cannot tell you is that in 1970 the ARS proudly awarded Evelyn the Gold medal, its highest award, for her work on the genus rhododendron and in 1990 the Victoria Chapter was very pleased to present her with the Bronze Medal for her work at the Chapter level.**



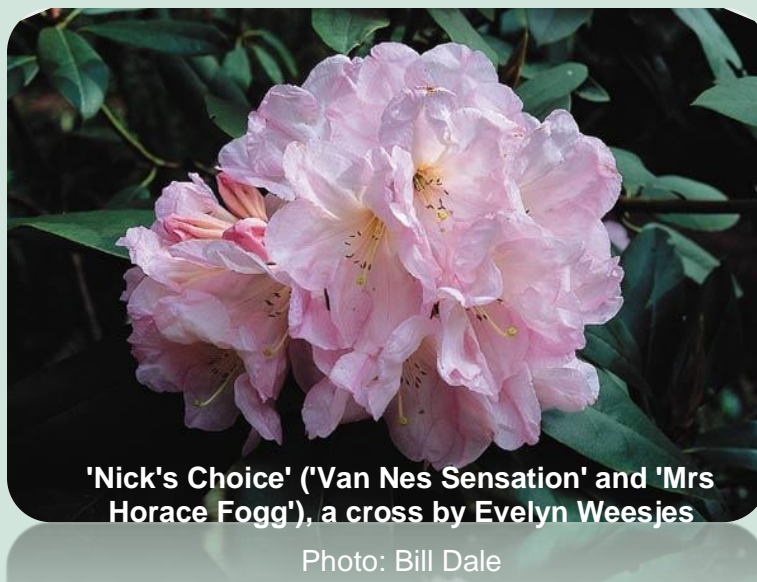
*Towner Crest, the garden overlooking Towner Bay from the crest of the hill, is a jewel in the crown of gardens encircling the Garden City of Victoria.*

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**'Clayoquot Warrior'**  
**( *R. strigillosum* x 'Essex Scarlet' )**  
**a Hjalmar Larson cross**







## TOWNER CREST: COLLECTORS' GARDEN PAR EXCELLENCE

**Another descriptive article about Evelyn Weesjes and Towner Crest appeared in the *Journal of the American Rhododendron Society Volume 56 Number 2***

Sections of this article, written by Bill Dale of Sidney, BC, and Sonja Nelson of Mount Vernon, Washington are reprinted here, in honour of Evelyn Weesjes. Read the full article in [JARS v56n2](#)

*“Ten acres of Pacific Northwest woodland with towering Douglas firs is a wondrous sight. Stolid trunks reach straight for the sky to form a canopy of deep green. Osprey and eagles soar above the treetops, looking for perches. Sunlight trickles through the branches in dappled splendor. In such a woodland on Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Evelyn and Nick Weesjes built their garden, Towner Crest. Yet for all the glory of the trees, the shrub layer in the Weesjes' garden draws the visitors – and rightly so. Here 3,500 rhododendrons grow in the shelter of the woodland, replacing much of the rambunctious native shrub layer such as salal and trailing blackberry. The conversion of seven acres of the ten acres of native shrub thicket to a rhododendron garden is a major accomplishment by the Weesjes. A second, ongoing accomplishment is the maintenance of a garden of such scale. A third accomplishment is the development of the rhododendron collection itself – a collection of many highly regarded hybrids and, especially, good species forms . . .*

"The garden is not landscaped. The trees are everything," Evelyn said about the landscape plan - or lack of one - for the garden. While the garden owes its design to the trees, open areas for viewing plants from a distance and paths for viewing plants close-up, create a unified whole. On the unimproved site, a swamp afforded one large open area, where the house was built. The driveway approach to the house descends through dense woodland down to the house and its surrounding lawn.



From both the back and the front of the house, lawn areas create long-range views across grass to mixed borders and dispel any feeling of claustrophobia. The plantings in the borders and other beds near the house display not only rhododendrons but also the Weesjes' wide collection of other plants - trees, shrubs, perennials, annuals and bulbs. Among these are: *Acer palmatum* 'Shishigashira', *Stewartia sinensis*, *Styrax*, *Prunus*, hostas, hydrangea, ferns and lilies. Most of their various forms of *Rhododendron degronianum* ssp. *yakushimanum* are planted in these mixed borders. Seven acres on the 10-acre site are planted. With the exception of the central open area described above, the garden consists of paths winding through the trees and the rhododendrons, creating a stroll garden on a grand scale. Strollers can view flowers, foliage and plant form at close range . . .



One of the many surprises in this garden is the labeling – each plant is identified by label! In fact, when the Weesjes host[ed] tours, they put special visitor tags on them. Although some of the native shrub layer has been removed, garden-worthy plants such as the native *Philadelphus lewisii* (mock orange), *Vaccinium parvifolium* (huckleberry), *Mahonia aquifolium* (Oregon grape) and *Polystichum munitum* (sword fern) were kept. A few sections have been allowed to naturalize. In several spots along the stream primulas have self-seeded among the ferns and moss, and in a shady ravine ladyferns, primulas, epimediums, umbrella plant and natives co-mingle to create a lush groundcover. In fact, two such scenes are featured in Ann Lovejoy's. . . published book *Naturalistic Gardening* [Editor's Note:

2002]



**Waterfall amidst  
native plants at  
Towner Crest**

Photo: Bill Dale

In the beginning, the Weesjes planted the rhododendrons in groups by series (the classification system in use at the time), but, according to Evelyn, "They didn't look right." The plan was abandoned. In general, the species and hybrids are planted in separate groups of plants that simply look good together. For instance, a group of big-leaf rhododendrons is planted in one well-protected spot. The determining principle governing siting of plants, however, is performance. If a plant needs more shade, more sun, better drainage or more wind protection, that plant is moved to a spot where it will perform better. The result: a garden of well-performing plants . . .

In building the garden the Weesjes had to consider two major climatic conditions: very wet winters and dry summers. Rainfall is 35 inches, mostly falling between November and April. To deal with the wet winters, Nick undertook the grueling task of digging drainage ditches to carry excess water to a main stream running through the property. To deal with the dry summers, he built an irrigation system that sprayed each plant at its base. The improvements to the site - removing underbrush, limbing trees, ditching, irrigating and improving soil - would be difficult for a small garden. For a 7-acre garden, the task was formidable indeed. The key, Evelyn said, was that Nick tackled one acre at a time.

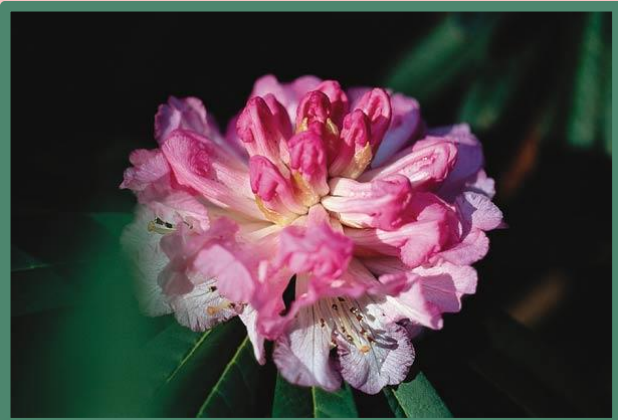
Planting the rhododendrons, once a portion was improved, was the final hurdle. The "couple thousand" plants stored at Evelyn's parents' home had to be transported to the new garden. The collection included many large specimens. Many of these had to be winched onto a truck and unloaded onto a cart at the garden. If a plant did not fit on the cart it was put on skids to drag to the site. One acre at a time, the garden was improved, and the rhododendrons planted.

Maintaining a garden of seven acres also turned out to be a formidable task - primarily Nick's task, says Evelyn. For instance, watering the whole garden once, takes three days between turning the valves on and then off again. During the driest months, Nick spends most of his time doing just that.

One indispensable tool at the garden - besides a mattock - is a shredder. In the work area are large piles of various types of shredded mulch. Old fern fronds prove to be a particularly good mulch when shredded. Shredding and spreading the mulch is just one of the ongoing tasks of maintenance.

Among the 3,500 rhododendrons are some of the best species forms and hybrids. Two fine forms of *Rhododendron calophytum* grown by Ted and Mary Greig and James Barto thrive in the garden.





***Rhododendron* 'Tony Schilling'**  
a form of  
***R. arboreum* ssp. *cinnamomeum* var. *roseum***

Photo by Bill Dale

The Greig's form of *R. strigillosum* is another rare plant. 'Tony Schilling', a form of *R. arboreum* ssp. *cinnamomeum* var. *roseum*, is a coveted plant, with its pink flowers spotted with crimson. *Rhododendron davidsonianum* 'Ruth Lyons' is a fine form of this species. Other outstanding species include *R. micranthum*, *R. oreotrephes*, *R. degronianum* ssp. *yakushimanum* 'Koichiro Wada' and *R. cinnabarinum* ssp. *xanthocodon* Concatenans Group.

Among the many fine hybrids are crosses by Hjalmar Larson grown on and named by the Weesjes: 'Nellie Timmerman', 'Elze Weesjes', 'Bill Dale', and 'Dave Dougan'. 'Clayoquot Warrior' (*R. strigillosum* x 'Essex Scarlet'), also a Larson cross, was named and registered by Ken Gibson. Two old English hybrids, a red blooming plant of the Tally Ho Group and the late blooming 'Aladdin', thrive in their garden. Historic Northwest crosses include the well-known British Columbia hybrid, 'Transit Gold', a cross by Dr. S. Holland, 'Whitney's Yellow'\*, a cross by William Whitney, and 'Grace Seabrook', a cross by Frank Mossman.

Evelyn says she is not a hybridizer but did make a "spur of the moment" cross of 'Van Nes Sensation' and 'Mrs. Horace Fogg' from which two named plants resulted: 'Nick's Choice' and 'Towner Crest' . . .

The Weesjes garden, therefore, is no secret to rhododendron gardeners – even beyond the shores of Vancouver Island. Not only have two persons singlehandedly managed to build a garden and develop a rhododendron collection rivaling many public collections but also have willingly shared it with others.”



**VICTORIA RHODODENDRON SOCIETY PICNIC, JUNE 2009** winners from the Spring Show were presented with trophies to hold onto until the following year

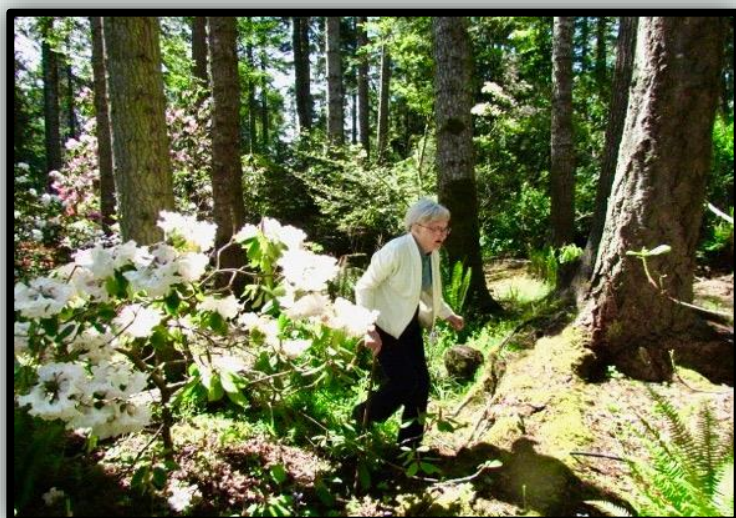
**Evelyn won in 3 classes**, unusual for her as she traditionally set up a large display of trusses from her garden, rarely entering in competition.

**Two exceptional minds, Evelyn with Ian McTaggart Cowan**



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**Evelyn Weesjes, May 2019, at the age of 90, sets a brisk pace through her garden; she knows exactly where *that* rhododendron is, and scrambles under the plant to read its label.**

Photos: Verna Buhler





## Carrie Nelson's Garden in Shawnigan Lake

Photos: Clockwise from Upper Left

*Clematis cirrhosis* var *balearica*: the fern leaf evergreen clematis is blooming now; description and pic from book, as I would have to climb a ladder for my own shot -- Ha ha

*R. moupinense*: early, blooms often freeze, needs shelter  
The split screen: unknown rhododendron, but so pretty and early; would love to know

*R. 'Ramapo'*: very floriferous, full sun

*R. Yellow Hammer*: spindly, susceptible to snow breakage but blooms early spring, summer, fall

*R. 'Odee Wright'*: yellow

*R. 'Fraseri'*: pink

*R. 'Starbright Champagne'*



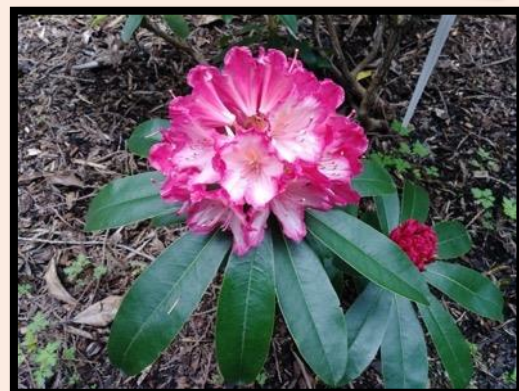


## Bill Dumont's Garden in Cobble Hill



Photos: Clockwise from  
Upper Left

*R. 'Double Winner',  
R. 'Clayoquot Warrior',  
R. Superflimmer,  
R. 'Cora Skies',  
R. 'Odee Wright 2',  
R. 'Fire Rim',  
R. 'Cunningham's  
Blush'*







## Al and Sandy Campbell's Garden in Shawnigan Lake

Photos: Clockwise from Below

*Camelia 'Brigadoon'*

*R. crinigerum*

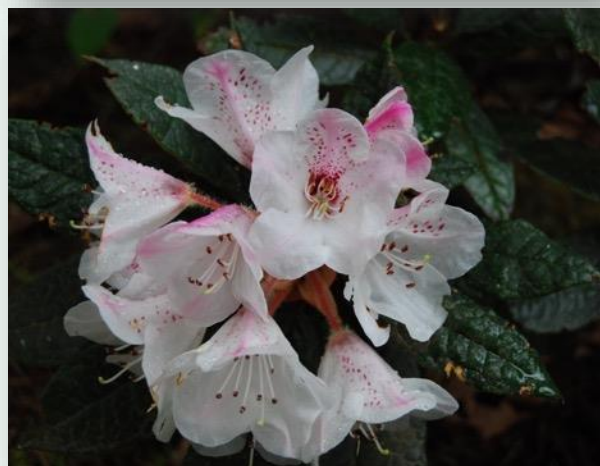
*R. citriniflora*

*R. 'Taurus' and 'Sir Charles Lemon'*

*R. zaleucum*

*R. 'Cowichan'*

*R. canadense*





**Al and Sandy Campbell's Garden (cont'd)**  
**Photos: Clockwise from Upper Right**

*R. blandfordiiflorum*, *R. 'Opal Luster'*,  
*R. 'Pepper Pot'*, *R. 'Trewithan Orange'*, *R. 'Transit Gold'*, *R. concatenanse*





## Sean Rafferty's Garden in Shirley (Sooke)

*Rhododendron dendrocharis*

Photos: Clockwise from Upper Left



*R. 'Anne Teese'*

*R. augustinii 'Cerulean Mist'*

*R. edgeworthii*

*R. 'Golden Witt'*





## Tricia Guiguet's Garden in Mill Bay



Photos Above Left to Right: *R. 'Trewithan Orange'*, and unknown  
Photos Below Left to Right: *R. 'Mrs Furnivall's Daughter'*, *R. williamsianum*, *R. 'Opal Bud'*





## Janice McLean's Garden on Saltspring Island



Photos: Clockwise from Upper Left

- R. 'PJM' with 'Snow Lady'
- R. 'Queen Wilhelmina'
- R. 'PJM'
- R. 'Sea Tac'
- R. 'Dame Nellie Melba'





## Janice and Laurie Moseleys' Garden in Cobble Hill

Photos: Below

*Changing views in front and back yard*

Photos: Left to Bottom

*R. 'Buttermint' with R. 'Vischy' and 'Linda'*

*R. 'Lori's Love'*

*R. 'Buttermint'*

*Peony Molly the Witch*





## Joe and Irene Hudak's Garden Bare Point, in Chemainus



Photos: Clockwise from  
Left Photo

### Dwarf Rhododendrons

*R. 'Ginny Gee'*  
*R. 'Ramapo'*  
*R. 'Cupcake'*  
*R. 'Patty Bee'*  
*R. 'Aksel Olson'*



shine in front of a  
dramatic bold rainbow  
of hybrids overlooking  
the ocean and  
blooming dogwoods

*R. 'Honey Butter'*  
*R. 'Bibiani'*





## Doug Kitt's Garden in Parksville



Photos Above: *R. Carmen* x *Ken Janeck*, *R. rigidum*



Photos Below: *R. augustinii* 'Eleanor', *R. augustinii* 'Playfair'





## George Morgen's Garden in North Cowichan



Photos: Clockwise from Upper Right

*R. schlippenbachii*, *R. 'Early Winters'*  
*R. 'Crater Lake'*, *R. 'Crater Lake'*, daphne, hellebore  
*R. 'Blaney's Blue'*, *R. 'Blue Baron'*  
*R. augustinii* (Cox's form), *R. augustinii* (Cox's form)





## Dorothy Kennedy and Randy Bouchard's Garden in Mill Bay

*... where rhododendrons eagerly wait to be called by name*





## Ali Morris's Garden in Mill Bay

*. . . delightful and unique treasures and lovely variations in R. augustinii*





## David Annis's Garden in Duncan

*... vibrant in colour and structure*



## Elsie Sand's Garden in Maple Bay

*Declares its beauty even after it has  
passed its prime; hellebore forms its  
seed head and Tulip 'Angelique'  
drapes softly*





## Malcom Ho-You's Garden in Chemainus

*Delight of Peonies*





## More Beauty from Member's Garden

. . . some with lost tags



**Photo submitted by Mary Pike**

*. . .delighted to finally know the name of my blooming R. 'Cilpinense'. . .*

**Photo submitted by Ken Gibson:**

*Hi Ken, Mom asked me to send you pics of your beloved Dorothy. We took her from Mom's yard in Oak Bay and moved her to our home here in Nanoose Bay last fall. She has exploded in blossoms and looks like the promise of Spring will bring much colour into our yard.*

*I am SO honoured to have a piece of history (and one with so much personal meaning behind it), at my own home.*

*Tami G. Jones*





**2020 – 2021**

## **Calendar of Events**

Contact CVRS:

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

### **CVRS Meeting: Wednesday, May 5, 2021 7 pm:**

**John Brimcombe:**

***“Subtropical Gardening Using Rhododendrons and Associated Plants”***

John Brimcombe is President of the Hardy Palm Society

(Organized by Barrie, CVRS)

### **Thursday May 6, 2021 7 pm:**

**Marion Mackay, Massey University, New Zealand:**

***“The New Zealand ex situ Rhododendron Conservation Project”***

(Organized by Glen Jamieson, District 1)

### **May 2021 – TBA**

**CVRS Plant Sale**

### **Thursday May 27, 2021 7 pm:**

**Mike Stewart:**

***“Dwarf Rhododendrons – Nature’s Carpet”***

(Organized by ARS Eureka Chapter)

**Zoom Link Available – See List Sent in March**

### **June 3 to 6, 2021:**

**ARS 2021 Virtual Convention:**

***“Rhodos Down East: Exploring the North Atlantic Region, The Rhododendrons at Kentville, Nova Scotia”***

Speakers include **Ken Cox**, famed nurseryman and rhododendron breeder from Glendoick, Scotland, **Joe Bruso**, rhododendron breeder from Massachusetts and **Todd Boland** of the Memorial University Botanical Garden in Newfoundland. Garden Tours include public and private gardens.

**Check it out at: [ars2021.org](https://ars2021.org)**

### **Friday June 25 to Sunday June 27, 2021:**

**Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden Species Symposium**

### **June – August 2021**

**Summer Picnic -- TBA**

## 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)

**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:** Randy Bouchard  
**Secretary:** Diane Allen  
**Director-at-Large:** Candice Feeney  
**Director-at-Large:** Wendy Wilson  
**Director-at-Large:** Barrie Agar  
**Director-at Large:** Dorothy Kennedy  
**Membership Chairperson:** David Annis

### Convenors

**Sunshine:** Mary Gale  
**Tea:** Judeen Hendrickson  
**Raffle:** Hilda Gerrits  
**Program Planning:** The ExecutiveTeam  
**Fundraising:** The Executive Team  
**Garden Tours:** TBA  
**Library:** Verna Buhler