



Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society

Newsletter

Volume 34:6 September 2023

Message from the President

It has been a trying summer for watering, and the cooler months of the autumn are most welcome. Even though it may still be dry, the cooler temperatures mean higher humidity, which will slow down transpiration. And never underestimate the power of dew. A story was related to me highlighting the practice of "boarding." Not what you may think, this procedure will green your lawn on nothing but air and attract the wrath of the water police. Before the days of irrigation, two men (it was always men in those days, lest I be accused of inequality) would attach a rope to either end of a board, say a 2x6, and first thing in the morning drag it over the grass to knock the dew off the blades of grass onto the soil below, where it was absorbed. This act alone was sufficient to keep a modern Victoria lawn a luscious green, a shining emerald among the straw-coloured turf, and get the owner reported to the municipality for illegal watering. Explanations and good sense prevailed, and the authorities never issued a fine.

In conversations with various garden clubs over the last few years, the main concern is the attraction and retention of members. Some of the local garden clubs have faded away with the loss of members. Those of us who love gardens find this a sad state of affairs. Thus, at the beginning of the CVRS year is an excellent time to start thinking about our path and how we can best contribute to the growth and protection of the Rhododendron. Shortly, you will hear the Executives. . .

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CVRS September Meeting

Wednesday, September 6, 2023
7:00 pm

Dorothy Kennedy

'Ethnobotany' (See Page 3)

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Banner Photo:

In August, pollinators cover every bloom of Hydrangea aspera, accepting hummingbird guests to their nectar tables as well.

Photo: Verna Buhler

Message from the President (continued)

Committee's plans on how together we can determine what that path will be like, how we can work collectively to invigorate our club with exciting activities, agree on the best operation of the CVRS, chart its future, and thereby create a welcoming environment for both old and new members. We are taking steps to hear and learn from you how to move forward in the best possible way.

Wet or dry, it's going to be a good year.

Barrie



WANTED

A techie for Rhodo club meetings

To paraphrase a famous quote - *Ask not what your Rhodo club can do for you, ask what can you do for your Rhodo club.*

We are looking for someone who could help with setting up a computer and data projector for club presentations and who feels comfortable with the technology, smoothing the



way for the presenter. The reward would be the club's undying gratitude and first dibs on the goodies on the tea table.

Interested parties may apply by contacting cowichanvalleyrhododendron@gmail.com or by calling Barrie. See the CVRS Membership List for the phone number.

It would be great to have a couple of people to spread out the responsibility.

Barrie

When physical spaces for gardening shrink but the spirit and the love for gardening do not, plants in small spaces respond to all the special attention and nurturing. The Begonia in Joe and Irene Hudak's patio garden bursts with blooms. CVRS members, Joe and Irene, used to live in Chemainus on a stunning five-acre property in Bare Point. They now live in Nanaimo and travel to fascinating parts of the world.



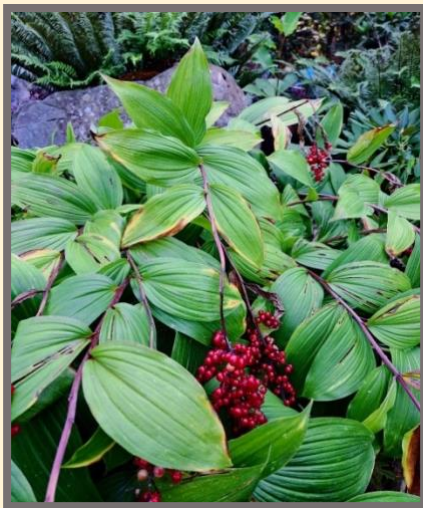
Speaker for September's Monthly Meeting

September 6, 2023, 7pm

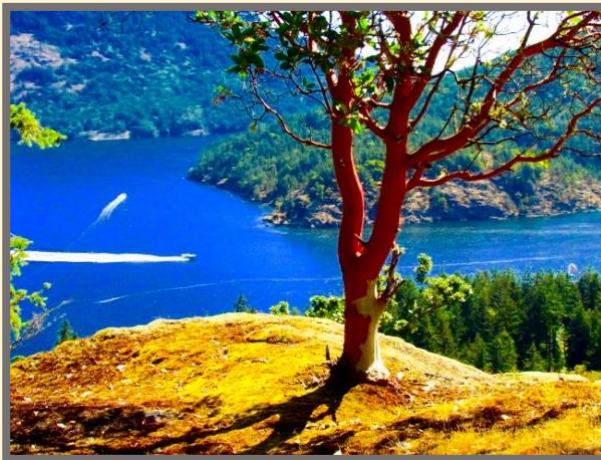
CVRS Vice President, Dr. Dorothy Kennedy

presents

Lessons from Ethnobotany: Indigenous Peoples' Knowledge and Use of Plants



Over the past one hundred years, social and biological scientists have collaborated with BC's Indigenous people to understand better First Nations peoples' relationship with plants and habitats. This talk examines the history of this ethnobotanical research, including Dr. Kennedy's participation in the 1970s-1980s. She will discuss how this information has transformed the view of Indigenous peoples as "a wholly non-planting and non-breeding culture," referred to by Governor James Douglas as the "wandering denizens of the forest," to an appreciation of First Nations having sophisticated plant management regimes deeply embedded in belief systems and reflected in enduring ties with ancestral lands.



Ethnobotany is the study of how people of a particular culture and region make use of indigenous (native) plants. Plants provide food, medicine, shelter, dyes, fibers, oils, resins, gums, soaps, waxes, latex, tannins, and even contribute to the air we breathe.

Letter from the Editor

What a fabulous thunder shower that was last night! On my coffee stroll through the garden this morning, lost vocabulary came to mind – *cloud cover* and *over-cast*.

It has been difficult to care for our gardens as fully as they would appreciate, but we have done our best.



The September issue is busy with photo stories of past events, some of which you may have attended and others that you may have missed. Enjoy the memories as you view and read.

When we next gather and are introduced to our new Executive team, let's also remember to thank the former volunteer Executive members who donated much time and effort over the years to CVRS fund-raising efforts. Their contributions are deeply appreciated.

This is the time when brilliant summer perennials are beginning to fade, but others begin to show their worth. I particularly enjoy the herbaceous *Hibiscus*. In spring and early summer, there is little to indicate that they have survived the winter. Gradually, they send out a stem or two that I award with a glance of approval and then forget. Quietly they thrust up more stalks until one day I notice that a lovely bronze shrub, healthy with multiple buds on every stem has filled a two-to-three-foot space. It is peering out through branches of a *Viburnum* 'Mariesii' that has spread, as is its habit, over the *Hibiscus* originally planted too close. I make a mental note to move one or the other in fall.

In the days following, it is as if Gloria O'Keefe positioned her canvases in the garden; the *Hibiscus* buds open to display gigantic and exotic blooms. Each flower fades quickly, but the display continues for weeks as more buds open daily.

I look forward too, to the trees whose flower buds are swelling. As soon as the first *Heptacodium* flower appears the hummingbird finds it and sips its nectar. Several *Franklinia alatamaha* tree flowers are already opening, camelia-like blossoms among leaves that are turning red.

Continued. . .

Continued. . .

One topic of conversation that gardeners have shared is that they have witnessed a larger number of bees busy in their gardens this summer, than they have in years. The numbers were not great in spring, and gardeners worried, but then they arrived in healthy numbers. Pollinators demonstrate which plants attract them, and with awareness and planning, we can readily accommodate their preferences.

What are the late summer tasks that will encourage healthy gardens next season? Perhaps you will find a few helpful reminders in the Fall Gardening Task List in this issue.

Fall is a wonderful time to plant rhododendrons, trees, shrubs, and companion plants. By examining your soil, you may experience more success when planting rhododendrons in your garden. There are some simple at-home tests you can perform if you aren't sure about your soil.

When choosing more plants for your garden this fall, take time to read the photo story of late-flowering pollinator attractors in this issue, and the excellent article written by John Deniseger, in the latest issue of the *Journal of the American Rhododendron Society*, about many factors, other than flower colour, to consider when choosing your rhododendrons.

Enjoy the cooler evenings ahead.

Verna



Message from the Executive

Congratulations!

The CVRS wishes to sincerely congratulate Verna Buhler on her appointment of Secretary of the American Rhododendron Society. This new position is an outstanding achievement and a testament to her years of hard work and dedication to the genus *Rhododendron*. Verna will excel in this new role and contribute immensely to the health of this organization and the dissemination of information, as she continues to do on behalf of the CVRS. Well done, Verna!

CVRS Summer Picnic

Photos submitted by Melanie Fiander unless otherwise indicated



Guests are greeted by William Pike and Randy Bouchard Photo: Mary Pike

The CVRS 2023 Summer Picnic was held in Melanie Fiander's stunning garden on Sunday, June 25th.

The gathering place proved to be a secret garden, bursting with perennial blooms, roses, and contrasting shade plants.

Several tables were warmed by rays of sunshine and others cooled by towering fir trees.

Guests moved in and out of the sun, gathering to chat with their many friends.

New members were heartily welcomed, and their fresh energy contributed to the positive atmosphere. New members were given a rhododendron plant as a gift to welcome them to the Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society.



Potluck Buffet Table

We have carried out enough tests over the last five years to affirm that club members are excellent chefs. One who earned highest praise was Diane Allen, who prepared the most delicious Chicken Marsala, the feature protein, for the picnic.



A Garden Favourite

A stunning rose growing up an arbour was the guests' favourite plant and led to an impromptu demonstration on propagating roses from cuttings by Janice Moseley. She advised to take softwood cuttings in spring to summer, and hardwood cuttings in fall.

Melanie Fiander, hostess and garden creator, believed the rose to be the hybrid musk rose, Rosa 'Ballerina'.





Dorothy Kennedy, VP

CVRS Executive for 2023/24

Continuing for a Second Year in Office:

President: Barrie Agar

Vice-President: Dorothy Kennedy

Secretary: Mary Pike

Member-at-Large: Sandy Campbell

New Executive Members:

Treasurer: Elisabeth Zoffman

Member-at-Large: Janice Moseley

Member-at-Large: Laurie Moseley

Member-at-Large: Tricia Guiguet

CVRS Members are grateful to you for
offering your volunteer time.

Annual General Meeting

Barrie Agar, President, welcomed the members to the CVRS Annual General Meeting. She described a successful year and announced that the earnings from the 2023 Plant Sale was the highest ever thanks to Dorothy Kennedy's superb organization and the help of the volunteers of the CVRS.

She announced that the Executive had donated a \$3000 bursary to Vancouver Island University students in a horticultural program. The bursary is to be awarded over a three-year period.

A motion presented by outgoing Executive Member-at-Large, Ali Morris, and supported by three other Executive Members to donate \$5000 to the Phase Two Development the Greig Rhododendron Species Garden at Milner Gardens and Woodland initiated intense discussion but was defeated to allow a new Executive to make the decision, regarding whether or not a donation would be directed to support the Greig Species Rhododendron Garden, by December 2023.

Diane Allen, outgoing Treasurer, presented the Financial Report and was thanked by George Morgen for her excellent work.

Elections of the 2023/24 Executive followed. All one-year positions of President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer were vacant as were three Member-at-large positions.

Barrie thanked members for participating in the Annual General Meeting, welcomed the new members of the Executive, and spoke of some of the plans the returning Executive had already considered for the upcoming year.

Special Thanks to Former Executive Members:

**Ali Morris, Diane Allen, Candace Feeney, and Wendy Willson
who retired in June 2023 . . .**

. . .after serving on the CVRS Executive Committee and in annual fundraising efforts for the Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society for so many years!

Who did the CVRS depend on for experienced knowledge of plants and pricing for the CVRS Annual Fundraising Plant Sale?

Who did the CVRS depend on to organize plant divisions and potting up events for the plant sale?

Who led the propagating event for the division of Hosta in Fall 2019 to produce over 100 Hosta plants for the 2020 CVRS Plant Sale?

Who led the propagating event for the division of Peonies in Fall 2020 to produce over 100 peonies for the 2021 CVRS Plant Sale?

Who led the Plant Salvage and Potting-up Event for the CVRS Plant Sale at a garden in Satellite Park?

Who, for many years divided and donated hundreds of her own unique plants for the CVRS Plant Sales?

Who wrote and submitted articles on unique companion plants for the monthly CVRS newsletters?

Who attended every summer session for potting up hundreds of rooted rhododendron cuttings?

Who showed up for counting and listing plants for the CVRS Plant Inventory?

Ali Morris did!





Who provided some of the finest main dishes at special CVRS social events such as Summer Picnics and Christmas Parties?

Who effectively served as Secretary of the CVRS Executive for years?

Who understood the expectations for Non-profit Societies and served as the knowledgeable leader regarding Constitutions, By-laws, and important procedures?

Who stepped up to fill the position of Treasurer when no one else did?

Who brought entertainment and humour to potentially tedious meetings and events?

Who managed to run back and forth between CVRS events and home to fulfill her commitments to both club and vital family matters?

Who, for years, humbly coordinated CVRS communications and self-identified as “just the Mail Lady”?

Who managed the frantic on-line sales of plants during COVID restrictions?

Who showed up at all Plant Propagating and Potting-up events to write labels for hundreds of pots of plants for the CVRS?

Who counted, recorded, updated, and reported CVRS Plant Inventories over the years?

Who coordinated many of the CVRS Picnics and fulfilled numerous tasks, particularly during the challenging COVID years?

Who demonstrated she was a natural planner of Social Events for the CVRS?



Diane Allen did!



Who decided, while she was still young, to join the Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society?

Who accepted a position to serve as a Member-at-large on the CVRS Executive Committee?

Who decided that she was fascinated with rhododendrons and the propagation of plants and worked on the reliable A-Team, in the dirt beside Ali Morris, at plant propagation, division, and potting up events?

Who brought sass and humour to CVRS events?

Who worked hard at the CVRS Plant Sales each Spring?

Candace Feeney

Who served as one of the most dedicated cashiers at CVRS Plant Sales?

Who went to great lengths to ensure the health of CVRS members during COVID restricted periods?

Who put on some gloves and laundered some cash for the CVRS?

Who agreed to serve on the CVRS Executive as Treasurer as soon as she retired from employment?

Who got her hands dirty by helping at plant salvage, plant division, and plant potting-up events?



Wendy Willson did!



Who helped raise thousands of CVRS Funds by preparing hundreds of plants for the CVRS Annual Fundraising Plant Sale Event?

Former Executive Members,

**Ali Morris, Diane Allen,
Candace Feeney, and
Wendy Willson did!**

Thank-you ladies for your years of hard work and dedication!

Barrie Agar's Summer Pruning Workshop

Photos and Text submitted by Mary Pike



On Saturday, 22nd July 2023, a summer pruning workshop was held at the Mill Bay home of Dorothy Kennedy and Randy Bouchard.

Barrie Agar demonstrated the care of pruning tools, how to take them apart, clean and sanitize them, before and during use. The fourteen eager participants then moved on to Dorothy and Randy's beautiful garden for further instruction.

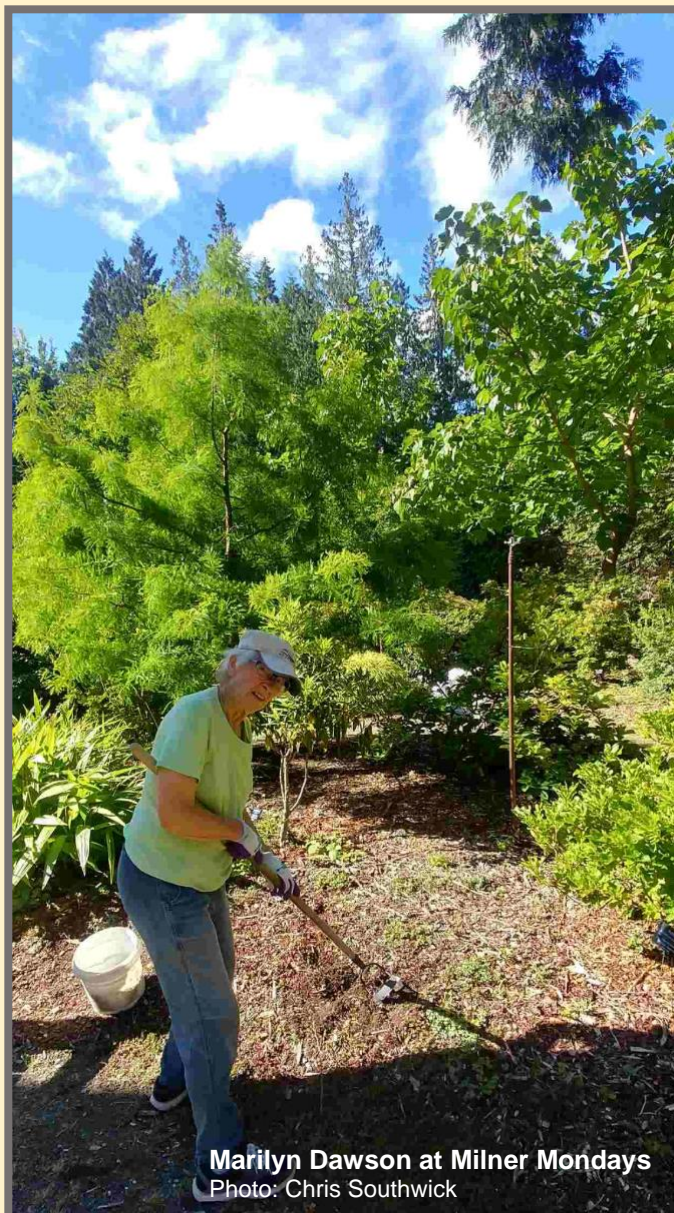
She showed the group how to prune various plants, shrubs, and fruit trees. While she included tidying an errant rhododendron, taking care not to damage next year's growth, Barrie noted that she would be pleased to hold a late spring workshop to instruct members in the pruning of rhododendron, for these are generally not pruned in summer.



Milner Mondays

at the

Text and photos by Verna Buhler unless otherwise indicated



Marilyn Dawson at Milner Mondays
Photo: Chris Southwick

Hopefully, some of our Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society members were able to learn first-hand about the importance of the work being done at the Greig Rhododendron Species Garden at Milner Gardens and Woodlands in Qualicum Beach this summer.

As mentioned at the AGM and CVRS Summer Picnic, Milner Mondays were this summer's workdays for volunteers, who are, almost exclusively, from the Mount Arrowsmith and Nanaimo Rhododendron Chapters.

If you have never met Marilyn Dawson you are missing out on a relationship with one of the finest examples of warm, feisty, and committed personalities in our rhododendron community. She greets everyone who shows up at the work parties with a welcoming smile and words of appreciation. She acknowledges, with a gentle wince, that she is not sure how useful she will be in the garden that day, but then picks up her hoe and works steadily for three hours. You will receive reminders from her about work parties, and gracious notes of appreciation.



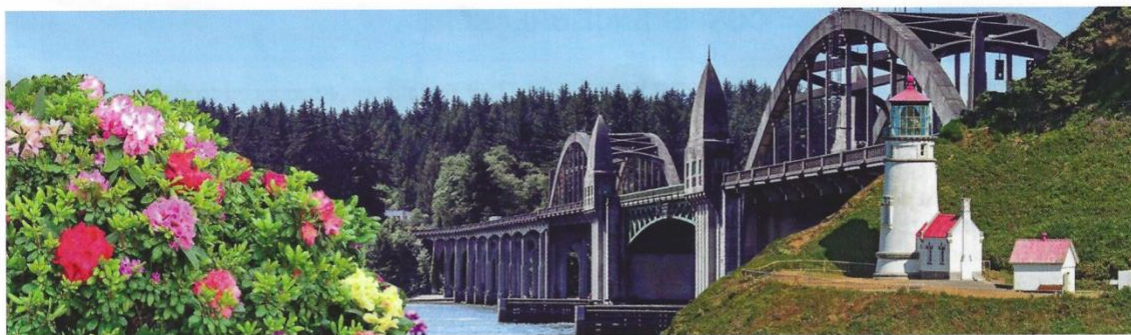
Photo: Chris Southwick



John Deniseger and I have a pleasant chat as we weed on opposite sides of a rhododendron. Two volunteers take a much-needed break in the heat, although the temperature in the garden was cooler than in the Cowichan Valley due to the ocean influence.

Coffee break with this group of a dozen lovely volunteers was filled with banter and laughter.





2023 FALL WESTERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE

FLORENCE COASTAL SPICE

OCTOBER 19-21

Thursday, Oct. 19

An evening of Renewing old Acquaintances and making New Friends over Local Wines, Beer, or Soft Beverages.

Friday, Oct. 20

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>8:00 – 9:00 Greeting
Plant Sale and Silent auction</p> <p>9:00 – 9:45 Jack Olson – My Favorite
Flowers</p> <p>10:00 – 10:45 Sandi Jensen – Fuchsias</p> <p>11:00 – 11:45 Day Farrald – Geriatric Hybrids
- Around Forever</p> <p>11:45 – 1:15 Lunch, Plant Sales, and Silent
Auction</p> <p>1:15 – 2:00 Mike Bamford, Eastern VP
Deciduous Azaleas</p> <p>2:15 – 3:00 Augie Bergman – Rhody Wood</p> <p>3:15 – 4:00 Will Clawson – Rhododendron
Species Botanical Garden</p> <p>4:00 – 6:00 Plant Sale and
Silent Auction</p> <p>5:00 – 6:00 Social Hour/Wine, Beer, Pop</p> <p>6:00 – 7:00 Dinner</p> <p>7:00 – 8:00 Log Cabin Nursery – Ops by
Lorrie Zeller</p> | <p>8:00 – 9:00 Greeting
Plant Sale and Silent auction</p> <p>9:00 – 9:45 Jack Olson – Foliage and
Buds</p> <p>10:00 – 10:45 Mark Akimoff - Bulbs</p> <p>11:00 – 11:45 Mike Bones – Siuslaw Chapter
Shows and Gardens</p> <p>11:45 – 1:15 Lunch, Plant Sales, and Silent
Auction</p> <p>1:15 – 2:00 Linda Derkach, ARS Pres. – Your
Chapter and you</p> <p>2:15 – 3:00 Ryan Contreras - Hybridizing</p> <p>3:15 – 4:00 Atsuko Gibson – RSBG.
Expeditions to Japan</p> <p>4:00 – 5:00 Silent Auction</p> <p>4:00 – 6:00 Plant Sale</p> <p>5:00 – 6:00 Social Hour/Wine, Beer, Pop</p> <p>6:00 – 7:00 Dinner</p> <p>7:00 – 8:00 Richard Flavell – Big Leaf
Species</p> <p>8:00 -9:00 Purchase & pick up Silent
Auction items</p> |
|---|---|

Saturday, Oct. 21

Fall - the Perfect Gardening Season

We may be tired from caring for our gardens in the challenging conditions of heat and drought in summer; so much so, in fact, that we feel DONE!

We want to put our feet up, grab a throw for our shoulders, and read a very thick historical novel.

We may resent *this very reminder* that the Fall season is a perfect and important time for gardening. We understand the theory: what we do in September will affect our enjoyment of our gardens next year.

Tackling the Gardening Tasks of September:

- **Find the energy:**

Tour a garden with a friend. In isolation, it is tough to find the energy. But by inviting a gardening friend to wander a garden with us, we will notice that we do indeed care, because our excitement about plants begins to lift our spirits.

- **Continue watering schedules:**

It is tempting to stop, because there is moisture in the air and a bit of dew on the patio chairs in the morning. However, the roots of plants have been parched repeatedly, and their leaves scorched in the hot dry conditions of summer. Landscape plants have been severely stressed making them susceptible to winterkill. They still need our assistance this month.

- **Turn over your compost piles:**

Create 'Black Gold' for your garden. You can make some of the best compost available. The ingredients: *organic plant-based material + moisture + air + time = garden compost.* It is important to turn your compost and to add a little moisture regularly.

- **Prepare for late fall feeding, soil improvement, and mulching:**

Pull back the mulch under the shrubs, like rhododendrons, that appear to need soil improvements and *gently* scratch with a claw tool to loosen the compacted soil. Be careful not to damage fine feeder roots of the shrub. Water well to ensure the water is absorbed into the soil instead of running off dry hardened soil.

Add organic soil materials when the soil has absorbed several inches of water. Old potting soil from annuals, chopped green materials from harvesting, aged manure, or compost can be mixed in with mulch.

- **Replace failing plants:**

Assess and edit your garden. In small garden spaces, replacing plants that are not doing well where they are, makes sense. Removed plants can be relocated in parts of the garden more suitable to their growing needs, divided and saved for the CVRS Plant Sale, gifted to friends, or composted – although, in a gardening community, that rarely needs to happen.

- **Rehydrate container plants:**

Hydrophobic soils need rehydration. If you are regularly watering enough that the water easily runs out the bottom of the container, but your plants seem to be struggling, the soil has dried up too much to have the ability to retain moisture. If the containers are manageable enough, lift and immerse them in a tub of water. Air bubbles will rise through the soil inside the container; when the bubbles stop, the soil is saturated and will continue to hold moisture when next you water. Saturation is necessary for containers that are too large to immerse as well. Gently trickling water into the containers for longer periods often proves successful.

- **Plant new plants into the garden:**

Fall is the perfect time to plant new plants. It is also the best time to divide plants and move some to other spaces in your gardens or to pot them up to share with others.

Rhododendrons and azaleas, shrubs and perennials are happy when planted in fall. Days are cooler and there is more moisture in the air. They can develop strong roots and become established before the first frosts arrive. Keep them well watered until the seasonal rains begin.

- **PLANT YOUR RHODODENDRONS!**

Are your rhododendrons still in pots? In Spring, you may have wisely hesitated to plant the rhododendrons you purchased at the May plant sales as you noted how quickly the summer heat was coming on. Yes, Fall is a perfect time for planting rhododendrons!

Review the best ways to do so in your gardens, keeping in mind that rhododendrons are shallow rooted. They appear to have increased need for filtered light in our changing climate. They always require acidic, aerated, well-drained soils, and do not require much fertilizer.



And don't forget the labels!

Next spring, you will be glad you gardened in September!

Rhododendron Soil Requirements

Analyze Your Soil with a Few Simple Tests:

- **Identify soil type:**
 - Pick up a small handful of moist soil and squeeze; then roll it in your hands:
 - Sandy soil type feels gritty and readily falls through your fingers
 - Clay soil type sticks together retaining its squeezed shape and smears when you roll your sample
- **Identify pH levels using distilled water:**
 - With a trowel, scoop soil from two inches beneath the soil's surface into two small jars (1 cup per jar)
 - Remove any chunks of debris, such as sticks and rocks
 - **Jar One:** Mix ½ cup of distilled water into the jar and stir; add ½ cup of white vinegar into the jar
 - If the soil shows a bubbling or fizzing action it has an *alkaline pH*
 - **Jar Two:** Mix ½ cup of distilled water and stir; add ½ cup of baking soda into jar two.
 - If the soil fizzes and bubbles, it has an *acidic pH*
 - **In both cases, the more exuberant the fizzing and bubbling the higher the levels of pH**

Rhododendrons need moist, acidic (4.5 – 6 pH), well-drained soils:

- Clay soils are often composed of tightly bound particles that do not allow adequate drainage nor adequate oxygen to reach the roots
- Some very sandy soils do not retain enough moisture

Organic matter is an essential component of the ideal soil composition for rhododendrons. Medium bark mulch is highly effective as it allows for oxygen for the roots, suitable drainage and adds acidity to the soils.

Rhododendron Light Requirements

In general, rhododendrons enjoy a small period of direct light each day to encourage strong flowering:

- As summers have become increasingly hot and drying, rhododendrons appear to prefer more filtered light and protection from burning rays of sun and drying winds than they have in the past
- Generally, small-leaved rhododendrons are more tolerant of sun and wind than large-leaved rhododendrons, as are both evergreen and deciduous azaleas.

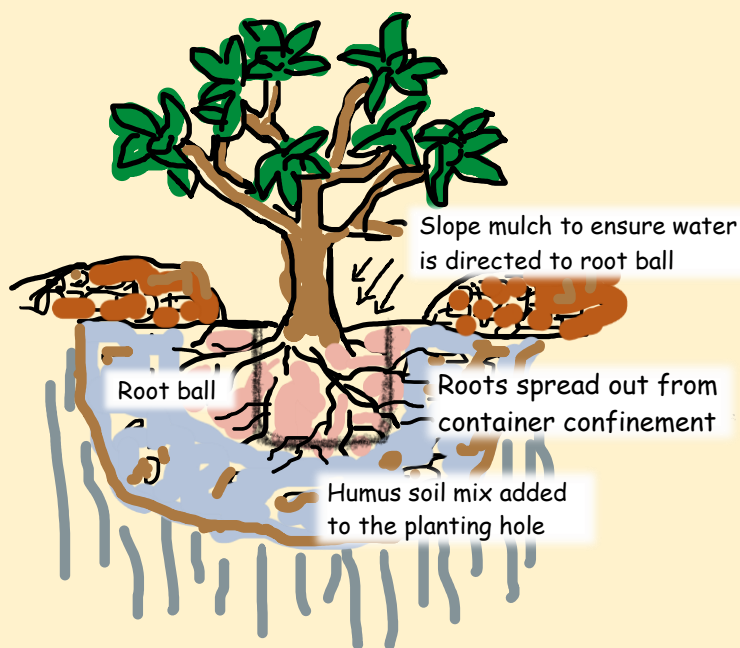


Fig. 1. Naturally well-drained soil

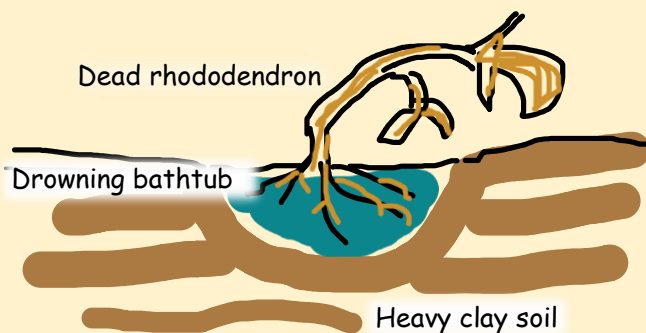


Fig. 2. Heavy, non-porous soil, such as clay

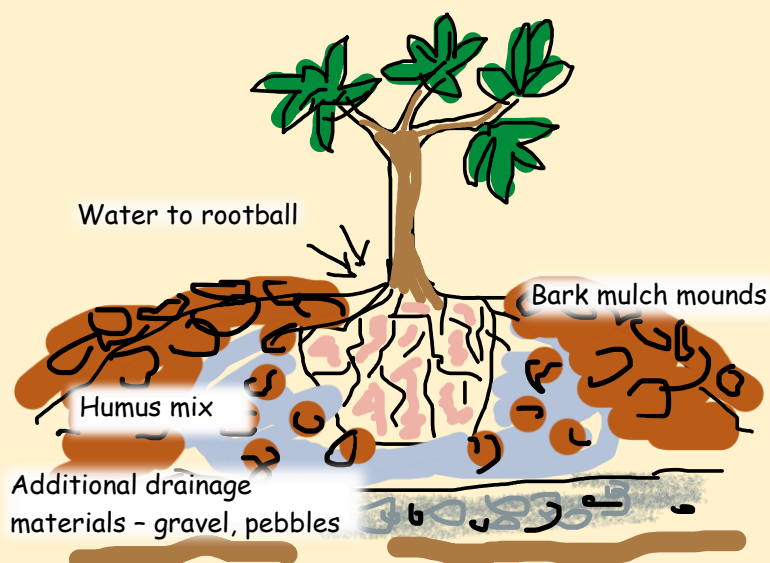


Fig. 3. Very heavy, non-porous

Prepare the Root Ball

Make sure the root ball is fully saturated. You may need to immerse it for a time.

Tease the roots out of the container root ball. Gently spread them as wide as possible.

Prepare the Planting Site

If the soil where you are planting your rhododendron is sandy loam, has gravel particles, and drains well, a hole could be dug into the soil to place the new rhododendron. Fig. 1

If the soil composition in your garden is heavy or even hard-pan clay, more effort to please the rhododendron will be necessary. Fig. 3

Digging a hole to plant your rhododendron is essentially drowning its roots in a bath. Its roots prefer showers. Fig. 2

Break up the hard soil with a fork or spade, as best possible, to encourage drainage and to allow some of the organic materials, that you will be adding, to mix with the soil. You will need to mound organic materials, ideally with coarse bark mulch, to build a bed to plant your rhododendron.

In our region, the humus mix that you add to the hole around the root ball should include a quantity of bark mulch. Other organic matter such as coniferous needles, leaf-mould, sandy loam, and a little compost would be suitable. *Note that many rhododendrons do not appreciate rich compost.*

Give your beautiful rhododendrons their best chance to please you!

Happy Pollinators

On Late Blooming Perennials

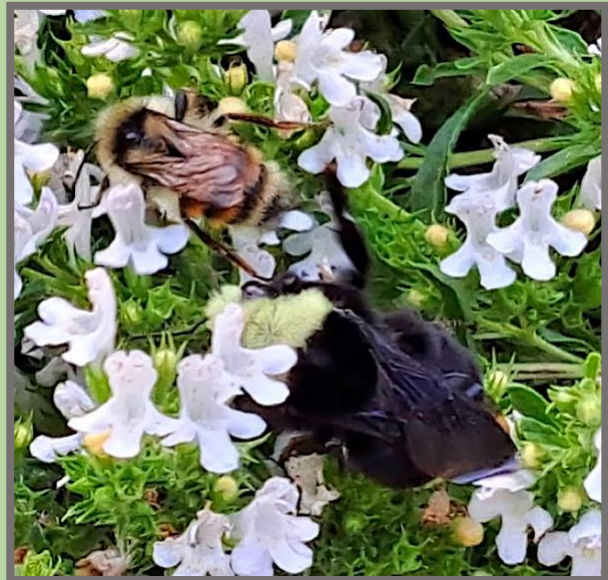


Pollinators are buzzing above fall-blooming, nectar-rich perennials

Clockwise, from upper left: *Aster* (Michaelmas Daisy); *Ligularia* 'Othello'; *Echinacea* (Coneflower); *Liatris spicata* 'Alba' (Gayfeather, Blazing Star)

On Herbs

Thymus vulgaris, attracts a wide variety of species and sizes of bees. A steroidal-sized bumblebee spent the day enjoying tiny flowers of a Thyme plant with other species of bees.



Lavandula angustifolia 'Hidcote' a winner of the Award of Garden Merit, is one of the most fragrant lavender varieties. It has a long-lasting, delightful scent, loved by humans and equally attractive to pollinators.

Bees love herbs!

On Late Blooming Shrubs

For nectar-seeking pollinators, *Hydrangea aspera* was a clear favourite among shrubs.

It attracted more than a dozen bees of a variety of species as well as a hummingbird to feast on its scrumptious nectar at the same time.



For the love of a challenge or a special sipping nectar upon reaching its goal, a bee ignores other blooms nearby, and with a “*No problem; I’ve got this*” determination works its way through layers of petals of the *Hibiscus syriacus* ‘Collie Mullens’.

Once again, the giant of the bees in our garden, sips on the sweetness of *Hydrangea paniculata* ‘Tardiva’ alongside a more common sized pollinator.



Both *Hydrangea* and *Hibiscus* are prized by pollinators in fall.

On Pond Plants



A pond area can become as busy as a hive when pond plants flower.

Pollinators move between nearby perennials such as *Echinacea*, *Liatris*, *Phlox paniculata* and the pond plants.

Pollinators need both nectar and water to thrive.



The pond hums with activity as hundreds of pollinators hover above and visit the flowers of *Pondetaria cordata*, or pickerel weed. More dive into and out of the yellow blossoms of *Nymphoides pelata*, yellow floating heart. In the photo on the right, three of eight blossoms have bees crawling into them, and at least three bees are travelling between the blooms.



On Late Flowering Trees

Pollinators are thankful for late flowering trees.

The *Franklinia alatamaha*, Franklin Tree, begins flowering with fragrant, camelia-like blossoms in fall, as its leaves are already turning to crimson, orange, and purple.

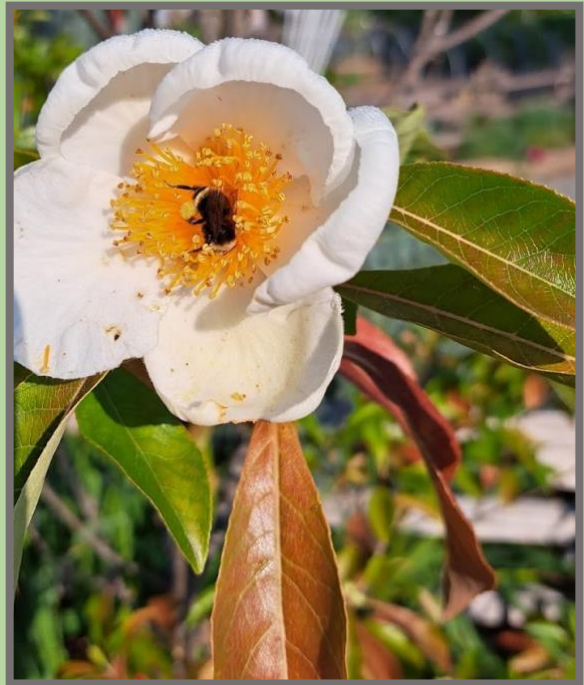


As the first tiny blossoms in the clusters of *Heptacodium miconioides*, or Seven Sons Flower, begin to open, the pollinators and hummingbirds arrive.

Pollinators of all shapes and sizes light on these blossoms to perform their important functions.

The treetops of *Oxydendron arboreum*, or sourwood tree, and *Heptacodium* hold sweet promises in their buds for the weeks ahead.

Plant for the pollinators!



Photos and Text by Verna Buhler

2023 – 2024 Calendar of Events

Contact CVRS: cowichanvalleyrhododendron@gmail.com

Wednesday, September 6, 2023, 7pm

CVRS September Meeting

Speaker: Dorothy Kennedy *Lessons from Ethnobotany*

Wednesday, October 4, 2023, 7pm

CVRS October Meeting

Speaker: Margot Moser *Small Ferns for Gardens and Rockeries*

Wednesday, November 1, 2023, 7pm

CVRS November Meeting

Speaker: Caroline Josefsson *Gardening with Less Water – Learning from the Garry Oak Ecosystem*

UPCOMING INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES and CONVENTIONS

October 13 – 15, 2023

Australian Rhododendron Society Conference, Tasmania, Australia

October 19 - 21, 2023

ARS Fall Western Conference, Florence, Oregon, USA

October 24 – 27, 2023

New Zealand Rhododendron Association Rhodenza Taranaki, New Plymouth, N. Z.

May 2 - May 5, 2024:

ARS Spring Convention, Bellingham, Washington, USA

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/>

Office of the American Rhododendron Society: member@arsoffice.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: Elisabeth Zoffman
Secretary: Mary Pike
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Director-at-Large: Janice Moseley
Director-at-Large: Laurie Moseley
Director-at-Large: Tricia Guiguet
Membership Chairperson: David Annis

Convenors

Tea: Judeen Hendrickson
Raffle: Hilda Gerrits
Speaker Team Chair: Sandra Stevenson
Fundraising: The Executive Team
Sunshine: Vacant
CVRS Garden Tours: Vacant
CVRS Bus Tours: Vacant
Library: Verna Buhler
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