



NEWSLETTER

Volume 20: 7

Editor: Ian E. Efford

October 2009

President's Message

As we approach the end of September and the calendar officially turns over into fall, the weather has been treating us very well, hasn't it? Don't you just love this time of the year with the warm days and cool evenings?

The gardens don't have to be 'put to bed', so to speak, just yet. There are lots of interesting things to see out there. As usual, I have a few rhodies that find the temperature just right to send out a few blossoms. Do you have a few also? Mildred Amateis and Cunningham's Blush always seem to produce a few blossoms for me at this time of the year. Another treasure in my garden at the moment is cyclamen. A number of years ago I got a few plants from the Evelyns in Nanaimo and put them into my lower garden. Those plants happily bloom and multiply. Also a lot of you have the fall 'crocus' blooming right now which provides a nice pink diversion in the garden. How are yours doing?

Did some of you get to Rose Rogan's Perennial Ridge plant sale? I went with a friend and was really impressed with what she had to offer. Even though I don't have room, I still bought a couple of azaleas.

Those of you that propagate will be starting to get organized to take cuttings for reproduction as the fall is the best time for that.

Coming up soon will be the big 'rake-up' of the leaves. Our Garry oak trees lose their leaves really late in the season so I don't expect to see many on the ground until November. Right now though, they are dropping all their acorns on the decks and roofs with loud cracks! (More acorns this year than last. Wonder what that means?)

See you at the meeting.

David Annis

Future Events

7th October

Garth Wedemire .“Lu Zhu - A Plant Collector's Passion” 7.30pm

9-11th April 2010

The Ultimate Rhododendron Conference
April 9 – 11, 2010 at UBC Botanical Garden
[see file accompanying this issue]

14-15th May 2010

The Society's North Island Garden Tour.

October 2010

“Celebrating 50 year of the Victoria Branch of the Australian Rhododendron Society and its famous National Rhododendron Garden”

The Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society

A Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society

PO Box 904, Duncan, British Columbia V9L 3Y3 <http://cowichan.rhodos.ca>

Plant Donations

In 2006 the Society donated \$500 worth of plants to Vancouver Island University [Malaspina College] and they can be seen in front of the campus alongside the Superstore. These plants have been well-cared for by the college gardening staff and the university has promised to move the plants to the new campus when it is occupied in a year or so.

Jim Crawford generously donation a collection of rhododendron books to the society and your Executive decided that some should go to the Society library and the surplus should be sold through a silent auction. It was also decided that the income from this sale should be used to make further gifts of plants to other suitable non-profit organizations in the valley. The principles behind such donations would be the promotion of both rhododendrons and the Society and the beautification of the valley and, thereby, encouraging tourism. Suitable organizations would include a hospital, hospice, nursing home, municipal property, parks or similar organizations.

In 2006, members proposed five locations which were Abbeyfield Nursing Home, Chemainus' Steeple Nursing Home, Providence Farm, Chemainus in Bloom and the university. The selection was based on a number of criteria which include: the ability of the public to see the plants, whether the site would receive adequate gardening care and watering, and security for the plants.

At a recent meeting, the Executive made the decision to round up the monies available to \$1,000 which would mean that the donations could be made in each of the next three years [we buy the plants at our own plant sale and thus save money on the purchase]. It was also decided that during the year in which the new campus is opened a further donation would be made to the university creating the beginning of a significant rhododendron garden on campus.

Members are encouraged to suggest suitable locations for the 2010 donation. Please submit suggestions to Ian E. Efford 597-4470 or efford@shaw.ca. We will review the suggestions and the Executive will report back to the membership before any final selection is made.

Ian E. Efford

More on Phytophthora

'The UK Government has allocated **25 million pounds** to help safeguard the natural landscape, woodlands and gardens of England and Wales against ramorum dieback or 'sudden oak death' as it is known in USA'. *Rhododendron ponticum*, as well as being a weed in UK, is also a favoured host of phytophthora and plans are being made to remove uninfected ponticum plants. The funds will be spent on research, for raising public awareness and for plant removal. The Scottish Government has carried out a consultation on ways to tackle the disease. {Ed. Quoted from May 2009 'The Garden']}

Spiders on the web

Although many people detest spiders, and some outright hate them, they do have some redeeming qualities. Every year, billions of spiders do away with a large number of disease carrying and crop destroying insects. If every spider ate just one a day for a year, those insects, piled in one spot, would weigh as much as 50 million people. Spiders are, by far, the most important predator of insects in the world. Spiders are beneficial inhabitants of any garden, ecosystem, or home because of their important contributions to biological control of pest insects. Spiders are considered to be the most important terrestrial predators, eating tons of pest insects or other small arthropods every year. Spiders are generalist predators that are willing to eat almost any insect they can catch.

Some of the common insects controlled by spiders include aphids, caterpillars, cucumber beetles, flies, grasshoppers, leafhoppers, plant bugs and thrips. Spiders are abundant and found in most habitats. If there were no more spiders, the whole planet would be swarming with flies. They eat pests that damage crops and which bite us and our livestock. Life would be thoroughly miserable without them. So every gardener should be happy to see spiders setting up home. They only need to be left alone!

Garden spiders, because of their beneficial nature, should be conserved. Avoid the use of broad-spectrum insecticides or insecticides containing pyrethrum or synthetic pyrethroids. Other practices that conserve spiders is to leave a portion of the garden covered in organic mulch or plant cover crop to provide an over-wintering site for egg masses. Having plenty of shrubs in the garden will give spiders somewhere to make their webs. By not using pesticide sprays, there will be more insects for the spiders to eat and this will also help to stop you poisoning them.

This fall while spending time in your garden, look around and see how many different kinds of spiders you can find. And at the same time keep in mind some of the gardening practices you can do to benefit spiders, who will in turn repay you by helping keep pest insects under control.

**Karen Delahaut, IPM Outreach Specialist,
University of Wisconsin and Dr. Linda S.
Rayor, Assistant Professor of Entomology,
Cornell University**

[Ed. quoted from the North Island Rhododendron Society newsletter.]

On Growing Gifts

In early spring, visitors to the magnificently tended Finnerty Gardens at the University of Victoria have the pleasure of viewing at least two flowering specimens of a rhododendron that bears the name “Buchanan Simpson.” How fitting that these annual blooms grace this garden, whose very inspiration and inception can be attributed to

Buchanan’s wife, Suzanne Simpson. Rhododendron “Buchanan Simpson” was registered by Mary and Ted Greig of Royston and is a tribute to enduring friendship as much as a professional salute. This was a gesture of appreciation to the Simpson name, so important in the history of botanical culture and nursery innovation on Vancouver Island.

Buchanan and Suzanne Simpson were formidable plant pioneers. For close to 60 years, they dwelled on the edge of a 25-acre forested peninsula beneath Bald Mountain on the south arm of Cowichan Lake. Here the couple established an international reputation for growing both native Cowichan plants and exotic introductions—especially the Sino-Himalayan rhododendron species for which discerning collectors clamoured.

The breadth and depth of the Simpson legacy was not confined to plants. Living as close to the land as they did, and fired by their own questing intellects, they became passionate naturalists and advocates for animals as well as plants. In 1925, Buchanan was publishing field observations of “Oregon Jays” in the *Canadian Field-Naturalist*. As late as the 1960s, Mrs. Simpson was writing provincial cabinet ministers seeking to protect certain threatened deer populations at Cowichan Lake. The Simpsons’ early years were financially tenuous. Their only predictable income was a paltry disability pension that Buchanan received from the Colonial Service following discharge for severe malaria contracted in Nigeria. Beyond this small certainty, it was necessary for Buchanan to busy himself in numerous and resourceful ways. At various times, he laboured in a shingle mill, as a farmhand, and was reported to have even worked his own trapline. Buchanan served as both a provincial game warden and a fire warden in the Cowichan Valley through the 1920s. During fire season, he occupied the Forest Service lookout tower atop Bald Mountain. At these times, Suzanne would

supervise the “*tender young things*” (as they described their nursery stock) and ferry supplies on her back as needed up the 837-metre mountain. Of their character, there can be no doubt about how hard-working and determined they were to forge a life in Cowichan. One admires their grit. Then, in the mid-1930s, Suzanne received a significant family inheritance that would henceforth assure the couple’s security. Now with means, their first priority was the purchase of freehold title to their land at Marble Bay. After years of austerity and privation, not for them were the luxuries of electric light and indoor plumbing. Most important was their sanctuary, where, in a glade among the trees, they lovingly restored and expanded a botanical garden first begun on this property by their late friends, Richard and Susan Stoker. This was their life and their pleasure.

Mrs. Simpson’s decision in 1966 to gift her land and precious plants on Cowichan Lake to the University of Victoria was a deep expression of conscience; it was an ultimate affirmation and the fulfillment of her faith in a better future. President Malcolm Taylor’s acceptance of this gift on behalf of the University assured continued protection for the land and made it forever available to students and teachers. The story of this gift did not end with Mrs. Simpson’s deed. Many esteemed plant collections of distinguished provenance have since accrued to the Finnerty Gardens. Among them was another Cowichan contribution—a selection of azalea hybrids developed by logger and plantsman Cedric Myers of Honeymoon Bay and quietly gifted in his memory by wife Gertrude Myers. Gifts can and do go around. The descendants of some plants have even found their way back to Cowichan. In support of a community heritage project, the University assisted the Town of Lake Cowichan with gifts of plant material for the establishment of a new Memorial Rhododendron Park in 2008.

In recent years, propagation aficionado Dave MacKas thoughtfully repatriated rhododendron

specimens to the Simpson homestead. Still other garden friends have kindly gifted plants of special significance, including a copy of the earlier-mentioned Rhododendron “Buchanan Simpson” that came home in 1997.

Not all gifts are so tangible or easily enumerated. Entomology Professor Emeritus Richard Ring nostalgically looks back on guiding 30 years of undergraduate classes to the Cowichan Field Station: “*I have scads of class and individual photographs to remind me of my many wonderful times there, as well as scores of letters from students who regarded those fi eld trips as being among their favorite memories of going to UVic.*”

As Mrs. Simpson will have known, the spirit of giving grows on without end.

Roger Wiles

[Ed. Quoted from the Finnerty Garden Friends newsletter]

Phase I of the Memorial Rhododendron Park in Lake Cowichan.

The town has been generous in funding half the development and installing our main plant watering system. This system is in its starting phase and will need funds to expand to other areas of the garden. We could use help from CVRS in any form, plants, funds, or a hand in weeding. Lake Cowichan's Community in Bloom members, a mere 6 people, with occasional help of volunteer machine operators have done all this so far, and we would welcome any kind of assistance.

We still have lots of room for more plant material in this first phase. The gravel path and several loads of bark mulch have provided a clean and healthy growing environment for our rhododendrons. Even after two heavy snow-coverings from street clearing the dwarf rhodos along the boulevard are flowering and

performing well.

The creation of our new park on Point Ideal Road, right next to the log hut of the town's Chamber of Commerce by the Old Locomotive, has now resulted in a grassed planted with 5 flowering dogwood trees. All shrubs are numbered and a corresponding listing of names is available on request from me, Ingeborg Woodsworth, 250-749-6291 or mayocreekgardens@shaw.ca.

It was in November 2007, in pouring rain, volunteers of Community in Bloom Lake Cowichan members rented the largest cube van available in Victoria and proceed to UVIC's Ground Maintenance Department to pick up their generous donation of plant material. Three rhodos, possibly returning to the lake area after 80 odd years, required a two hour loading period from four men repeated at the Lake Cowichan destination in unloading. A number of small shrubs of that donation are still in a nursery bed before they will find their actual home in the park.

Lake Cowichan residents and CVRS members viewing our first year's efforts.

Rains have come at last. We shall be able to prune, replant or rhodos that did not receive enough water in our gardens. The Memorial Rhododendron Park with Beaver Creek and various water ways has humidity and shade from deciduous trees is an ideal site for any shrubs and trees that have become too large for your garden.

Species and hybrid rhododendrons and azaleas are mingling at present time as we are eager to fill spaces. But, future plans are for separations of areas for species, island hybrids and others. Across the street from the park in the Kaatza museum we have begun a library of Rhododendron books to be used by serious gardeners and students of this species. Here too we welcome your donation of books or funds. Consider, where are your Rhododendron books going after your passing? I have willed my rhododendron books to this worthwhile and well maintained library.

Ingeborg Woodsworth



Arnisa Farm Ltd

The nursery 's first End of Season Sale is on Saturday and Sunday Oct. 3-4, 10-5

The nursery is on Holland Road, in Cobble Hill and there will be small signs on on the Trans-Canada at Fisher and Cobble Hill Rd and all the way to the nursery.

All together well over 150 named Varieties of perennials and shrubs. They are quite big and many of them are just dying to be divided. Definitely a great start for anybody that is looking ahead to next spring.

This is the two days of the year that our little nursery is open to the public.

Arnold arnisa@shaw.ca, (250) 743 1560 or 732 4486 <http://www.arnisa.ca>



Just a reminder when we complain that it takes 10-15 years for some rhododendrons to flower. The above Japanese White Pine has been “in training” since 1625!

United States Bonsai Collection at the National Arboretum, Washington, DC.

Tea and Goodies Teams 2009 / 2010

September	Marie Thérèse Evans 748 - 5787	Janet Gardner 748 - 1867	Don Loewen 701 - 4210
October	Ruth Cook * 748 - 8293	Jackie Walker 743 - 3650	Ron Martin 748 - 8700
November	Mona Kaiser * 715 - 1814	Cindy Little 743 - 6777	Sandy Kedziora 748 - 6868
February	Carrie Nelson * 743 - 3679	Fiona Lawrence 743 - 7808	Rose Rogan 748 - 0098
March	Maria Kemmler * 746 - 8751	Peter Kearns 746 - 5782	Marie Jaques 743 - 5021
April	Susan O'Connor * 746 - 8695	John Hardy 701 - 0447	Hilda Gerrits 701 - 0755
May	Anne Slaby * 748 - 4623	Allan Murray 743 - 9190	Mary Gale 743 - 9329
(Spares)	Sharon Tillie 748 - 8254 Sandy Campbell 743 - 3597	Leslie Bundon 748 - 9219 Peter Lewis 746 - 7000	Elizabeth Leverington 746 - 1851 Nora Dowsett 746 - 6657

* INDICATES THE TEAM LEADER

Please let your team leader and Marie Thérèse know if you can't come to the meeting. The team leader will bring ½ litre of milk. The team under each month's heading will supply goodies, set up and make tea and coffee; are also responsible for the kitchen clean-up after the meeting. The teams should be at the hall by 7:15 p.m. Marie Thérèse will look after the kitchen supplies ; if anything is needed please call her at (250) 748 – 5787.



Monet's garden in Giverny



**PETER LEWIS IN FRANCE
THIS SUMMER**



Bagatelle Rose garden in Paris

October 2009

From the Editor

The problems that I had in holding the formatting of the newsletter last month was probably the resulted from including very large files announcing various meetings. To avoid this issue, I am going to attach these announcements to my e-mail informing you that this present newsletter is available.

A second problem last month was the intermittent nature of the newsletter on the district website. This appears to be an issue which arose outside of my control!

Ian E. Efford

250-597-4470 efford@shaw.ca

Plants for sale at our meetings.

At the last meeting of your Executive, it was agreed to allow members to bring their own plants for sale at the meeting. Income from the sales would remain with the seller. This does not mean that the meetings should become a major nursery! We encourage members to bring a small number of particularly interesting or rare plants that are unlikely to be available from the normal sources.

2009-10 Directors

President:	David Annis
Vice President:	Alan Campbell
2 nd Vice-President	vacant
Treasurer:	Judeen Henrickson
Secretary:	
at Executive Meetings	Billl Dumont
at General Meetings	vacant
Members at Large:	Sharon Tillie
	Jeremy Evans/
	Marie Therese Evans
	Bill Dumont

2009-10 Conveners

Librarian:	vacant
Garden Tours:	(vacant)
Spring Sale:	(vacant)
Club Liaison:	Ingeborg Woodsworth
Raffle:	Judeen Henrickson and Hilda Gerrits
Membership:	Sandra Stevenson
Speakers:	Alan Campbell
Tea Coordinator:	Marie Th�rese Evans
Ways and Mean:	(vacant)
Website:	(vacant)
Social:	(vacant)
Historian	Mona Kaiser
Propagation	Alan Campbell
Sunshine	Mary Gale
Editor	Ian E. Efford