



# NEWSLETTER

Volume 21: 6 Editor: Ian E. Efford and Siggie O. Kemmler October 2010

## President's Message

As I write this message, I am still in my shorts trying to prolong the summer. There have been a few days in the month that required longer pants, but on the whole, shorts have been the norm, even on the cloudy days. I was hoping that we would have the type of weather that I really love in September: nice sunny warm days and cool nights. But the rain we have had was much needed and has been good for the rhodies and the lawns after the summer dry spell. The Executive is busy lining up speakers for the upcoming meetings. October's program will be a panel of 'experts'. We will have four of our members answer some question about various aspects of rhododendrons and rhododendron growing. The information will be of use to all levels of rhodo enthusiasts.

In the last issue of the newsletter there were some photos taken at our picnic in June. I apologize for not submitting them to the editor with captions. Although it is not hard to figure out what most of us were doing in the photos: eating and visiting. One of the pictures showed Roger and Ann Slaby receiving an award from the CVRS. They were honoured as being some our earliest members.

This month you will see in the newsletter two more photos. One is of Peter Kearns and the other is of Mary Gale. I presented Mary's at the September meeting but did not have my camera with me that night. I tracked her down the other day and snapped the photo you see further on in the newsletter. Peter's photo was taken on the afternoon of September 1<sup>st</sup> on his patio deck in Cowichan Bay. He was unable to come to the meeting, so I went to him to make the presentation.

Speaking of early CVRS members, I read through the book 'Flower Child Logger' by Allison Healey. It is about Dave Dougan. I found it to be a very interesting read and I recommend it to everyone that have ever met Dave. There is a copy in the CVRS Library.

See you at the meeting on October 6<sup>th</sup>.

**David Annis**

## Future Events

**Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> October 7.30 p.m.**

**A Panel of Experts: Alan Campbell, Leslie Drew, Allan Murray and Roger Slaby will answer a series of set questions commonly asked about rhododendrons. The floor will then be opened to questions from the floor.**

**Come and learn the answers to your particular question!**

**Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 7.30 p.m.**

**Dr Glen Jamieson the editor of the ARS Journal and a frequent traveller in search of rhododendrons will be speaking.**

## From the Editor

Thanks to Siggie Kemmler, who has taken over the formatting aspects of production of the newsletter, the job is a lot easier for me and far less stressful during the last day or so before it must be distributed. This month we seem to have a full newsletter and I hope that our readers will help keep up this standard by writing articles or comments, supplying photos, or suggesting subjects that would result in interesting articles.

I was sorry to hear from Alan Campbell that almost no one expressed interest in joining the expanded propagation activities. This is a great pity as the propagators in our midst are the source of the plants in our raffles, of those that are given to new members and of those that were given to every individual who attended the summer picnic. In fact, free rhododendrons is a major benefit of membership in the society. At the moment, a few people provide most of these plants in particular

Alan Campbell, Siggie Kemmler and Ken and Madeleine Webb. Members should know that the Webbs arrived at the last meeting with plants for the raffle and an additional 33 beautiful specimens to be used during the year for future raffles! These plants are being held by Siggie Kemmler and myself and five or six will be put in the raffle at each meeting.

Those involved in propagation make a very important contribution to the society as well as enjoying the hobby of raising new plants from cuttings or seeds. Consider joining this select few! Either come to a propagation meeting or, what might be better, come to the propagation training workshop in Victoria late this month which is described elsewhere in the newsletter. If you are interested in going to Victoria for that day, car-pooling can be arranged.

Ian E. Efford [efford@shaw.ca]

## Companion Plants for Rhododendrons Gordon MacKay

There are many plants which are suitable bedfellows for rhododendrons, and I will mention a few here as a follow up of my recent presentation to the Society. It may also benefit those who were unable to attend the presentation.

My first instinct was to select plants in the Ericaceae family and I did show some pictures of *Vaccinium moutpinense*, a lovely evergreen with red fall colour and similar coloured spring growth. *Cassiope* is a less known genus in these parts but is used extensively in Scotland, especially in peat walls. They dislike summer drought, so some supplementary irrigation may be required in the Cowichan Valley.



*Cassiope Muirhead*

The taxonomists have now put *Pernettya* into *Gaultheria* so I suppose it will not be x *Gaulnettya* 'Wisley Pearl' anymore, but nevertheless, this is still a lovely plant amongst some of the smaller rhododendrons, appreciating the same conditions – and it has a very prominent pink berry over winter.

*Meconopsis* come in many species and although they prefer a cooler summer than ours, are still worth trying in a woodland garden setting. It is best to save seed from most of them if you wish to continue growing these as many are monocarpic. The quintessential blue is *Meconopsis grandis*.

The genus *Gentiana* contains many suitable candidates to go with rhododendrons, including the



*Gentiana Saltireclose*

“willow gentian” *G. asclepiadea*, which has sufficient height not to get lost amongst taller plants. There are also quite a few that can be used in the rock garden, like *G. acualis* and *G. verna* which add unbeatable colour in the spring. I showed *G. acaulis* 'Rannoch'. As many of you are aware, the rhododendrons which suit the rock garden best will need to be compact, slower growing and tolerate quite a bit of sun.

There are quite a few bulbous plants which can be used and I showed some slides of one of my favourite bulbs, *Fritillaria*. The native *F. affinis* can get to three feet when mature and looks incredible with rhododendrons. Smaller ones will require good siting so as not get lost. These include *F. pudica* (*pudica* means bashful!) and *F. michailovskiyi*. I have managed to grow flowering plants from seed, flowering four to five years from sowing, but well worth the wait. I hope to continue growing these gems.



*fritillaria pudica*

*Eranthis* is another good one for early spring and planted en masse, these can carpet below larger rhododendrons. Many members seemed to admire my slide of a choice bulb called *Nomocharis* and rightly so, this is one of the most esteemed bulbs for both the woodland garden and peat walls.

There are numerous *Erythronium* species and cultivars and some can be expensive, as I found out at a recent Rock and alpine Plant sale in Vancouver; but knowing how slow some are to build up bulbs to divide and sell, the price reflects this. I have had good success with *Erythronium tuolomense* from California and also *E. oregonum* and look forward to try more types. These are best suited to the woodland garden.



*Salix jejuna*

Trilliums are another excellent choice for adding spring colour to the woodland rhododendron garden. The much sought after double-flowered one was

shown in my slide. These can be slow to bulk up from seed, so some patience is required if you plan to propagate these.

I also mentioned the crevice garden – this could be a way to grow dwarf rhododendrons along with the alpinists that thrive in this environment. Some of the crevice plants are *Soldanella*, *Campanula*, dwarf willows like *Salix x boydii* which was only ever found once in the wild, *Daphne*, *Saxifraga* and *Penstemon*. There are many more, and if you decide to plant dwarf conifers in the crevice garden you get the added benefit of a more compact, slower growing plant if planted in a narrow crevice, where root growth is restricted, similar to being planted in a pot.

Planting alpinists with rhododendrons in troughs is a true test of the gardener's skill to select the right combination of plants, which will not outgrow the container nor grow into each other. Many of the alpinists like dwarf willow, *Saxifraga*, dwarf boxwood (e.g. 'Morris Midget') and dwarf *Hosta* (e.g. 'Cat's Eyes') work great. Care should be taken to select the correct conifer as many may look small and cute in small pots at the garden centre but can grow too big for the average sized trough. Seek



*Salix x boydii*

out knowledgeable gardeners and nursery people who have actually grown these plants in their own gardens.

To summarize, I have divided the different plants into different areas:

Planting members of the Ericaceae family with rhododendrons, e.g. *Cassiope*, *Pernettya*, *x Gaulnettya*, *Vaccinium*, *Kalmia*, *Kalmiopsis*, *Erica arborea*, *Phyllodoce*, *Enkianthus*, *Arctostaphylos*, *Chamaedaphne*, *Daboecia*, *Arbutus* (look for *A. unedo* 'Elfin King', a smaller growing cultivar) and

*Leucothoe*. These work particularly well in a peat garden using peat walls.

Traditional woodland garden e.g. *Trillium*, *Uvularia*, *Nomocharis*, *Erythronium*, *Gentiana* (not all) *Eranthis*, *Dicentra*, *Corydalis*, *Hosta*., *Ferns*, *Helleborus*, *Soldanella* (amazing at Milner Garden) *Primula* and *Astrantia*. Most of the bulbs mentioned are more suited as understory to the larger rhododendrons.

In the rock garden e.g. *Campanula* (research species as some can run too much), *Salix x boydii*, *Daphne*, *Pinus mugo* 'Teeny', *Ilex* 'Rock Garden', *Primula* 'Cowichan Garnet' (not too much sun), *Penstemon* and *Solidago minuta*. The rhododendrons used for this area would need to be of slow or moderate growth, preferably dwarf and tolerate quite a bit of sun.

Crevice garden. This is an old idea which has taken the rock gardening world by storm. As my slide showed, put simply, it involves lying flat rock e.g. slate on a vertical plane, forming crevices for alpine and other suitable plants. Suited to items like *Daphne*, *Saxifraga*, dwarf conifers (research the right ones), *Campanula*, *Primula*, *Sedum*, *Sempervivum*, *Salix jejunata* and many, many more.

Troughs. These are the real miniatures of the landscape and will require special attention to getting the correct plants and teaming them up with the real dwarf, slow growing rhododendrons. I have used plants like *Salix breviserrata*, *Jasminum parkeri*, *Ilex crenata* 'dwarf Pagoda' *Fritillaria pudica*, *Hosta* 'Masquerade', *Primula scotica* (a personal favourite, no surprises there!), *Tsuga canadensis* 'Minuta', *Gentiana ornata*, *Daphne* 'Lawrence Crocker' and *Sempervivum* 'Cafe'.

I hope this has given a brief overview of a few of the plants and areas you can combine with your Rhododendrons. I look forward to getting the opportunity to present to the group again sometime; perhaps we can discuss suitable trees for Rhododendrons, as I did not mention these yet.

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Gordon MacKay can be found at Alba Plants,  
Cowichan Bay, BC (250) 746 1555  
www.albaplants.com

## Suggested reading

'The Peat Garden and its Plants' Alfred Evans

'The Crevice Garden' Zdenek Zvolanek (has a residence in Victoria)

Beth Chattos' Woodland garden' Beth Chatto

'Bulbs of North America' North American Rock Garden Society Publication

George Forrest V.M.H. 'Journeys and Plant Introductions' George Forrest (the Man himself)

'The Explorers garden' Daniel Hinkley

Creating and Planting garden troughs' Rex Murfitt (a rock gardening guru from Victoria BC)

'Daphnes: A Practical Guide for Gardeners' Robin White

'Conifers: The Illustrated Encyclopedia' D.M. Gelderen and J.R.P. van Hoey Smith

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## Report on the Symposium and 75th Anniversary Celebrations of the German Rhododendron Society Bremen, May 18-25 2010 (Part2)

The second speaker after Hartwig's introduction into German rhododendron culture was Wilbert Hettterscheid, co-author of the International Code for the Nomenclature of Cultivated Plants, former scientific curator of the Botanical Gardens of Wageningen in the Netherlands, and member of the Dutch Rhododendron Society.

Dr Hettterscheid spoke on the history of rhododendron collections in Holland. The Dutch explorer/botanist Von Siebold introduced the first rhododendron to Holland and named it *Indicum*. Von Siebold also was a major collector. *R. indicum* and its relatives are the basis of a flourishing azalea industry in Holland, where they became popular houseplants in the 20th century. The first named rhododendron in the West surely must be *r. hirsutum*, named by the Flemish botanist Carolus Clusius in the 16th (!) century. Most garden rhododendrons in the Netherlands are derived from introductions from the UK in the 19 and early 20 century. Plants also were introduced from Germany, Belgium, and the USA.

Today, four arboreta (in Rotterdam, Hilversum, Wageningen and Doorn) hold registered collections of species and cultivars, are part of the Netherlands' national rhododendron collection and an important contribution to the Dutch Botanic Gardens Collections Foundation. Under ARS supervision the Belmonte Arboretum in Wageningen is developing a reference collection of rhododendron species and cultivars ('Rhodo-dendron Collection Belmonte').

Marc Colombel spoke about the introduction of rhododendrons into France. In the 19th century Missionaries in collaboration with the Musée d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris collected the plants. The collectors were Soulié, Moussots, Farges, David, and Delavay. They did not collect seeds. Many plants were ordered and described by the taxonomist Adrien Franchet of the Ecole Botanique in Paris. In the 20th century rhododendrons were largely propagated and hybridized by the nurseries Halpin, de Vilmorin, and Moser and Croux. Some of their plants are still in the trade. since 1975 a species collection has been established by Jean Lennon, and Christian de la Sablière has opened the largest Rhododendron park in France, comparable to Exbury a hundred years ago since Christian is owner, plantsman and hybridizer. Marc also commented on the variety and peculiarity of rhododendron names. He only hybridized one rhododendron. He named it Rwain (Rhododendron Without an Interesting Name) - which of course is not quite true. Marc is a major hybridizer with more than 750 cultivars to his credit. He also founded the Breton Rhododendron Society, launched the first rhododendron show in France, assisted in putting the ARS seed bank on the web, and wrote many articles. In 2008 he received the ARS silver medal.

Rhododendron and azalea culture in Belgium was the subject of Philippe de Spoelberch, the fourth speaker. He created the 10 ha garden of Herkenrode and the 15 ha Arboretum Wespelaar. He is vice chairman of the International Dendrology Society, chairman of the Belgian Dendrology Society, as well as non-executive director of the Arboretum Kalmthout, the Arboretum Wespelaar, the Polly Hill Arboretum, the Rhododendron Species Foundation, the Franklinia Foundation, and the Magnolia Society International.

*R.ponticum*, *r.ferugineum*, and *r.maximum* are mentioned in Belgium at the end of the 19th century (Poederlée, 1792). Early in the 19th century the hardy Ghent azaleas were developed using the then available *r.viscosum*, *r.nudiflorum*, *r.luteum*, and *r.calendulaceum*. About 3200 named cultivars are found in catalogues from 1800 to 1994 of which 5% are still in the trade. Ghent still is the centre for the study and production of container azalea cultivars, mainly derived from *r.simsii* etc. The major Belgian

rhododendron collections are at the National Botanic Garden (Meise), the Arboreta Kalmhout (near Antwerp), Borijk (Genk, Hasselt), Robert Lenoir (Rendeux), and Wespelaar & Garden of Herkenrode (Haacht), and collections Beervelde (Lochristi), Anton de Clerq (Nevele), Albert de Raedt (Asper, Gavere), and Tony Suffeleers (Hasselt).

Forty years of records at Hespelaar and Herkenrode show that of 4880 plants 3180 are still alive. Of 1272 taxa tried, 850 are alive. Cold hardiness is a problem; many plants suffered during the exceptionally cold winter of 1985 when the thermometer went to -19° C. Also of concern are amillaria infections in woodland, and powdery mildew; *stephanitis takeyae* (Pieris lacebug), has become a big problem in Europe.

David Millais comes from a family of rhododendron enthusiast of note. His great-uncle is author of the two-volume book "Rhododendrons" (1917, 1924); his father explored the Himalayan flora extensively and in 1970 started Millais Nurseries, which David now manages. British hybridizers and hybrids was the theme of his presentation.

The first rhododendron introduced to England was maximum (1785). The London nurseryman John Fraser collected another American native, *catawbiense* (1809); *ponticum*, *arboreum* (1810) and *campanulatum* (1825) followed. The first cross between a Himalayan and western plant was made at Highclere Castle in Berkshire. The cross of *arboreum* (Himalaya) and a *catawbiense* (Appalachia) x *ponticum* (Asia Minor) cross was named *r. Altaclerense*, of which 800 seedlings were raised. During the 1850s many Himalayan species were introduced by Joseph Hooker. Interest and breeding of rhododendrons peaked during the 1920s and 1930s. While big nurseries (Waterers, Slocock) developed hardy commercial hybrids, large gardens and estates competed to create the most exciting plants.

Early members of the Rhododendron Society include J.G. Millais, Sir Edmund Loder, J.C. Williams, Henry McLaren (Lord Aberconway), Sir John Ramsden from Muncaster Castle, Lionel de Rothschild from Exbury. Their gardens still hold some of the best rhododendron collections in Britain and are famous for their breeding specialties. More recent British breeders are the Cox's of Glendoick with their 'bird' series of dwarfs, Arthur George of Hydon nurseries who specializes in good foliage yak hybrids, and Ted Millais, David's father, specializing in yellows and late flowering rhododendrons.

*(to be continued)*

**A PUBLIC PRESENTATION AND PLANT  
 SALE**  
 with  
**ORNAMENTAL GRASSES AND BUD  
 BLOOMING HEATHERS**  
**OCTOBER 7, 2010**  
**COBBLE HILL FARMERS INSTITUTE**  
**WATSON AVENUE**  
**COBBLE HILL**  
**7 P.M.**  
**ONLY 100 TICKETS AVAILABLE**  
**COST: \$10**  
**(VANCOUVER ISLAND HEATHER CLUB**  
**MEMBERS \$5)**  
**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT**  
**NORMA DIROM – 250-746-1995 HEATHER**  
**SCHYF- 250-743-4173**

site) to help verify the age of this mammoth rhodo. Located on the 49th parallel, Ladysmith is a picturesque town built on the hillside overlooking the glistening waters of Ladysmith Harbour. One of the oldest settlements on Vancouver Island, the community known as Oyster Harbour was established in 1899 by James Dunsmuir, son of Vancouver Island's prosperous coal-mining family. The community was designed as a recreation and dormitory complex for miners, serving as a shipping port for coal from Nanaimo. Dunsmuir moved many buildings by rail to this peaceful spot he had chosen.

So, that makes the town of Ladysmith 111 years old. One can assume from this information that the rhodo in question couldn't possibly be 125 years old. Perhaps the garden clubs or the Heritage Societies are pushing the age of their 'Cynthia' to promote tourism or 'beat a record'. Not necessary in this writer's opinion...just look at the photo and they will come!"

From

NIRS newsletter September 2010

### Cynthia Again

In our last issue, I included a short article and a photograph about the very old rhododendron in Ladysmith. In the most recent issue of the North Island Rhododendron Society newsletter the editor, Noni Godfrey, made the point that this particular plant may not be 125 years old. As this is the most famous rhododendron in our Regional District, I thought that I should reprint her comments.

"This picture along with an accompanying article appeared in several e-mails and in a few rhododendron newsletters in the spring of this year. The sheer size of this rhododendron and the acclaimed age begged to be researched. After speaking to a few knowledgeable people and checking out the information on the internet this is what I have concluded.

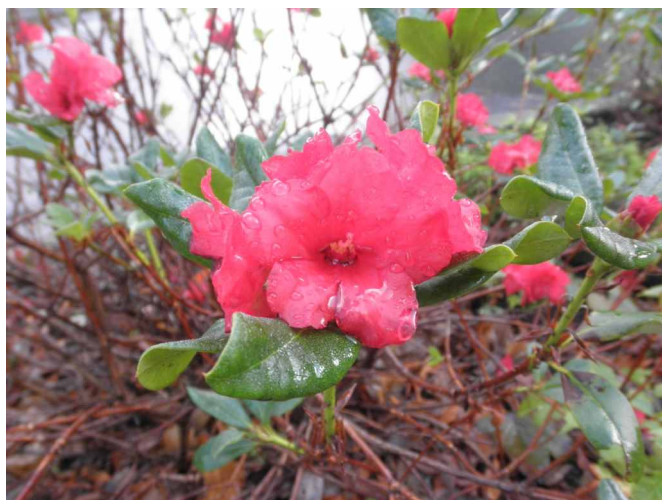
According to a well know source, the oldest known Rhododendrons on Vancouver Island are a couple of 'Cynthia's' growing in Beacon Hill Park planted by George Fraser in 1889 when he was working as foreman for John Blair building the park; before he settled in the Ucluelet area. So, that makes these George Fraser plants 121 years old!

This rhodo in Ladysmith is a 'Cynthia', and the present owner of the property has only ever stated that it was "...over 100 years old." Now, a little history of the town of Ladysmith, (from their web

### Autumn Flowering

Rhododendrons flower through spring and early summer and a few have a smattering of flowers in the autumn. Now and again one sees a plant in full flower in the autumn. Such is the case along the verge on Royal Oak Drive where the following photos were taken by Siobhan Efford during the last week of September. Anyone able to identify this plant?





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### Acknowledging the Photographers

In the past, the photographs used in the newsletter have not always been accompanied by acknowledgment of the photographer. I apologize for this oversight. The error is not intentional, but my failure to handle all the small details that accumulate just before the newsletter is to be distributed. In the last issue, David Annis photographed the picnic and Sharon Tilly the plant sale while I photographed the two plants. The acknowledgment of the photographers and the headings under the photos were lost in the final preparation stage

Ian E. Efford, Editor

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### Victoria Propagation Group Workshop

The Victoria Propagating Group is a very successful monthly group that has about 25 active members. We will be holding a hands-on propagating seminar on October 30<sup>th</sup>. We will start around 10 a.m. to let people from up-island and the mainland get here. A full day is planned, including an early group dinner so everyone can still get home that evening. We will discuss all types of propagating. A very loose agenda allows us to go just where everyone leads us. Many members of our club will be on hand to offer their views on cuttings, seeds, and alternative propagating methods. There will be a hands-on session in the garden, where all attendees will

actually take cuttings and stick them in my propagator – hopefully some of their own “babies” will have rooted by next spring. There will be lectures on seeds, cuttings and nurse grafting, etc. You should bring warm and dry clothes, as we will be working in the garden. A nominal charge will be made for lunch so that we can continue the excitement throughout the day. Due to room constraints we might have to limit or cut off the number of attendees – first come, first serve.

Please contact Ken or Madeleine Webb at [kenwebb@live.ca](mailto:kenwebb@live.ca) or 250-744-1785.

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### The 2008 Edinburgh Conference: A Follow-Up

Attending international or regional meetings of rhododendron or other plant societies is a great way to travel and learn about the plants we love. One can meet and have discussions with most of the regional and international leaders in the field many of whom have written the books and articles that are the source of much of our own knowledge. The talks bring you the most up-to-date information on the developments in the field, new horticultural practices, new plants coming on to the market, and new scientific discoveries. There is also the opportunity to make friends with other attendees with the same interest and visit their gardens on the garden tour associated with such meetings. Some of these result in lifetime friendships and private visits back and forth across the continent or the oceans.

One problem at such meetings is absorbing all the very interesting information that is crammed into two or three days. Lectures are missed because you are involved in a very interesting conversation or there is a conflict with another session or dinner the previous evening was accompanied by a rather good wine and the tendency to doze off is overwhelming. This problem is partially solved by the proceedings of the meeting that is usually published some time afterwards.

In May 2008 a number of members of CVRS attended “**Rhododendron 2008: 50 years of modern day Exploration, Conservation and Hybridising**” in Edinburgh hosted by the Scottish Rhododendron Society and the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. It combined all the features of a very good conference - excellent speakers, very

interesting attendees and fabulous gardens to visit - although it was extremely hot and quite atypical of Scottish weather. It also had the usual feature that one could not remember all the information that flowed over the few days of the meeting. This problem has been solved by the publication of the proceedings of the conference as **“Yearbook No.11 2009 The World of the Rhododendron: Proceedings of the 2008 conference at the RBGE.”**

This book contains the full published reports and photos on the 20 presentations given at the conference and allows the information to be read and considered at leisure. The topics covered include exploration, conservation, hybridization, disease, propagation and discussion of the genetic relationships between the various species and their geographic origins. It is a mine of up-to-date information and an excellent reference book for rhododendron enthusiasts.

Matt Heasman of the Scottish Rhododendron Society [matthew.heasman@virgin.net] has some copies of this publication. He states “They can be offered to you at a very favourable price of £12 (£5/Yearbook, £2 padded envelope plus £5 P&P). If anyone wants one you can ask them to email or send me a letter requesting a copy(ies). They then need to send me a bank draft/Postal Order for £12 (sterling only) and I will despatch the packet.” **His address is: Matthew Heasman, 9 Dunbeath Grove, West Craigs, Blantyre, Glasgow, Scotland, UK G72 0GL.**

If any of our members are planning to purchase a copy, I suggest that you let me or David know so that a single order can be submitted. This would reduce the postage costs.

Peter Hutchinson and Peter Cox, two of the most famous plant explorers who focus on rhododendrons, gave an excellent presentation entitled “Travels with our Plants” which reviewed the 18 expeditions to find plants in the Himalayas which they have undertaken together over the past 50 years. This presentation was accompanied by the release of their new book **“Seeds of Adventure: In Search of Plants”**. After the lecture, many attendees rushed forward to purchase signed copies of this large beautifully produced book. I was keen to purchase a copy and another one for the Society

although the added weight to our luggage was considerable. This volume is now in our library.

This book is packed with detailed information and beautiful photos of rhododendron species and companion plants in their natural habitat. In the Spring 2010 issue of the ARS journal the book received a very positive review but I found it is best considered to be a reference book. There are individual chapters describing each of the 18 expeditions that the two Peters have undertaken to find new species in the centre of rhododendron evolution in the eastern Himalaya area. Each chapter recounts going to a particular area and climbing the mountains. It describes the plants that are seen and something about the communities on the way, and the journey back. Individual chapters are well worth reading and most of us have read similar articles in the journal by a range of authors. Unfortunately, all the chapters follow the same format and one quickly loses track of which mountain is which. The book is ideal as a reference as one can study a chapter for a particular mountain range or look up the reference to individual plant species of rhododendron, primulas or other genera. One cannot just sit down on a rainy afternoon and read it for an hour.

It is, however, disappointing that two of the world experts on the subject provide little or no analysis of their botanical experience from these expeditions. I toured Peter Cox’s garden with him and know that he has an immense knowledge of the subject and yet no overall analysis comes out in this travelog. Many questions could have been answered by presenting the information in a different way. It would have been interesting to know more about comparisons of speciation and geographical variation between different mountain ranges in the same species. What other species are normally found with particular rhododendron species? How are the sub-genera of rhododendrons distributed across the region and in relationship to each other? What about altitude and its influence on the same species in different areas? These and many other questions could have been addressed in this book and are left untouched. I wonder if there is to be another volume analysing the intellectual information that came out of this enormous exploration effort? In the Symposium volume mentioned above, John Richards, a world expert on *Primula* has a chapter entitled **Rhododendrons and Primulas, “Excellent Bedfellows”**. In this the



author undertakes just such an analysis, comparing the distribution of two genera of plants that often have very similar ecological requirements and live in the same habitats in the Himalayas and elsewhere. He draws some very interesting conclusions about why certain rhododendrons and primula species are found together in the wild and others are not although they may still make excellent companion plants in our gardens.

There are two books on rhododendrons which I highly recommend. One as reading material and the other for libraries as it will become an excellent reference book. I also put in a plea for another book by Peter Cox and Peter Hutchinson in which they analyse their years in search of Himalayan plants and provide us with an integrated analysis of their knowledge of the biogeography an ecology of rhododendron and the associated plants.

**Ian E. Efford**

## Names

There is some confusion about the spelling and pronunciation of several rhododendron names. I would like to clear up one of them, namely the spelling of that lovely German hybrid's name, **Goldbukett**. Yes, that is how it is spelled, it is the proper botanical name for this plant. There is no connection to any bucket, neither the pail nor Mrs H Bucket, although I am sure the pretentious lady would like to spell her name 'Bouquet' – which is the meaning of the word. But 'bukett' is how Germany spells the name of the flower arrangement – and the plant is just that, a golden arrangement of lovely flowers.

S.O. Kemmler



## Recollections on the History of our Society

Now and again, one overhears interesting discussion about the origin of our society. In particular, the description of the first meetings taking place in a funeral parlour with members sitting on [or in] the coffins whilst the discussion take place! Little seems to have been written down about this period and so I would like to publish any accounts from those present at the time about how the society started and just who were the players. We begin with a few snippets from Leslie Drew but, before that, here is a list of the original members of the society in December 1988. For some reason, there are two lists. It is not clear if the first one was a preliminary meeting and the next was the more formal one. The attendees are divided because many were members of the Victoria chapter and therefore associate members of the new CVRS and others were new to a rhododendron society.

### Membership List - December 1988

#### A.R.S. Members

Shirley Campbell

Vic and Joan Clarke

Fred and Ann Colins

Audrey Combs

Etta and Greg Cook

Blair Fairweather and Carol [Carroll?] Whyte

Mary and Fred Gale

Stan Groves

Daphne Jackson

Peter Kearns

Joan and Chris Kolk

Katherine Miller and Gary Cline

Beverley Mountain

Roger and Anne Slaby

Peter and Pat Stone

#### Associate Members

Jean Bazett

Bill Dale

Leslie and Frank Drew

Trevor and Sandra Evelyn

Ken Gibson

Pat and Everett Jefferson  
Michael Langkrammer  
Norman Todd

### Local Members

Edna Green

Mary Oscar

Below are a few recollections from Leslie Drew on the birth of the society. I would encourage anyone who was present at this time to write down their recollections so that the picture of our birth becomes less misty.  
Ian E. Efford, Editor

### Recollections from Leslie Drew

“Though having moved here from Victoria in 1981 and having started a garden largely of rhodos, we were members of the Victoria club and worked on the ARS convention there in 1989, mostly at the urging of our friends Peter and Pat Stone and their friends Dave and Lurana Dougan. While also being members of the Victoria club, they attended pretty well all the first meetings of the CVRS, as I recall, and Dave was always willing to be the speaker and talk on his favorite rhodos. Stan Groves was very active from the outset -- he too had worked on the convention, and my understanding is that rhodo fanciers living in the south end of the valley like Stan felt there was enough interest for a separate chapter here, and would spare them from driving the Malahat in all weathers. Certainly we had no difficulty in signing up the minimum number of joiners -- was it 12? -- required by the ARS. (Bill Dale of the Victoria club and I made arrangements for the club bylaws and procedures to be followed under the B.C. Societies Act; we had done this already for the Victoria club after one of the convention organizing committee pointed out that if we were not a registered society we would be individually responsible for any financial loss. With a canny Scot like Norman Todd as the convention chairman there was no question about the wisdom of this. As things turned out, with a huge registration and funds rolling in from events, the convention netted the Victoria club \$50,000.”

“.....in a column I credited Dave Dougan with starting the CVRS, believing that to be so, and was immediately told that Stan Groves had been the originator. And probably it's true - he was much more of an up-front man. Dave and the Stones, having well-established rhododendron gardens.....”

“Dave Dougan was president of the Victoria chapter and had enough on his plate with the convention to take on a major role in the formation of the Cowichan Valley branch, and the Stones opened their garden for one of the convention events in which one of the up-Island chapters gave much help. Actually the first CVRS president was Kathy Miller....; she had and perhaps still has a nursery. “

### Plaques

Our society has been awarding plaques of recognition to founding members who have retained membership throughout the last twenty two years.



These longstanding members have all contributed extensively to the society's development and well-being. Two, who were recently given their plaques by David Annis were Mary Gale and Peter Kearns.



### 2010-11 Directors

|                                |                    |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| President:                     | David Annis        |
| Vice President:                | Ian E. Efford      |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice-President | TBA                |
| Treasurer:                     | Bill Dumont        |
| Secretary:                     |                    |
| at Executive Meetings          | Siggi Kemmler      |
| at General Meetings            | TBA                |
| Members at Large:              | Sharon Tillie      |
|                                | Carrie Nelson      |
|                                | Bernie Dinter      |
|                                | Judeen Hendrickson |

### 2010-11 Conveners

|                  |                                 |
|------------------|---------------------------------|
| Librarian:       | Elaine Kitchen                  |
| Garden Tours:    | Sharon Tillie                   |
| Spring Sale:     | the CVRS Team                   |
| Club Liaison:    | Alan Campbell                   |
| Raffle:          | Hilda Gerrits                   |
| Membership:      | Sandra Stevenson                |
| Speakers:        | the Executive                   |
| Tea Coordinator: | TBA                             |
| Website:         | TBA                             |
| Historian        | Mona Kaiser                     |
| Propagation      | Alan Campbell                   |
| Sunshine         | Mary Gale                       |
| Editor           | Ian E. Efford and Siggi Kemmler |

