



Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society

Newsletter

Volume 35:4 May 2024

Message

Hi Friends,

Isn't May a spectacular month for gardeners?

May is likely named after the Roman goddess, Maia, who oversaw the growth of plants. May acts as the bridge between spring and summer. May's full moon, which will be seen on May 23rd, is called 'Flower Moon', the naming attributed to the Algonquin peoples. May's birthstone is the emerald, a green type of beryl ranging in colours from light to darker green with the darker blue-green beryl deemed the most valuable.

Mother's Day, on May 12th, allows us to celebrate our mothers and the significant role they play in our lives, without them protesting.

Victoria Day, on May 20th, is a special day to celebrate Queen Victoria, born on May 24, 1819.

Carl Linnaeus, Swedish botanist and naturalist, was born on May 23rd, 1707. He introduced the system of classifying and naming organisms according to genus and species, called **binomial nomenclature**. The system uses Latin words, as that to identify humans, *Homo sapiens*; *homo* (man) and *sapiens* (wise) – if only that were true!

There are many more special events to celebrate in May but thank you for including the CVRS Plant Sale on May 11th, and the CVRS Spring Garden Tour on May 18th, in your personal schedules.

CVRS Meeting

Wednesday,
May 1, 2024
7pm

Special Viewing:
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Banner Photo:

Two weeks ago, *Rhododendron* 'Phalarope' was blooming in Massa's garden during the CVRS members' garden visit

Photo: Verna Buhler

***Rhododendron* 'Phalarope'**
was produced by Peter Cox, crossing
R. pemakoense and *R. davidsonianum*.

This hybrid is part of the bird series, along with 'Crane' 'Egret', 'Wren', 'Curlew' 'Razorbill' and others. The Red-necked Phalarope is a beautiful tiny wader and one that, as a breeding species, prefers waterbodies with plenty of emergent vegetation.



The species is a migrant, returning to Scotland in spring from wintering quarters at sea. Remarkably, tracking studies have revealed that Scottish individuals can winter as far away as the eastern Pacific. With a breeding population of just a couple of dozen pairs, this is not a species easily encountered by the casual observer.

Phalaropes have reversed gender responsibilities with the duller-plumaged male looking after the nest and chicks. Females have a striking scarlet neck patch, set-off by a slate grey head and bright white throat. These birds have an unusual feeding action, in which they spin around on shallow waters, creating a vortex that brings invertebrate prey to the surface.

Photo and information: *British Trust for Ornithology*

Rhododendrons you might find at the CVRS Sale.

We have many varieties and may only have 1 or 2 plants of each



Above: 'Amibblue', 'Ellie Sathers', 'Cody'; **Below:** 'Etta Burrows', 'Golfer', 'Mango Tango'



Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society

May Meeting

May 1, 2024, 7 pm

At The Hub



Kenneth Cox

Kenneth Cox, of Glendoick Gardens in Scotland, is a World-Renowned Rhododendron Authority and Author

‘Ludlow and Sherriff --Two Great Plant Hunters’

Ken’s talk will be on the expeditions and plant introductions of Ludlow and Sherriff, two great plant hunters, in Bhutan, Tibet and India in the 1930s and 1940s, using their photographs and film footage and photos of virtually all the areas they visit.



FERNS
have a
magical
effect in a
garden. Can
you ever
have too
many?



Letter from the Editor

Hi Friends,

Greetings from Puerto Vallarta, Mexico! This afternoon, we, my three lovely friends and I, will be returning to our stunning Cowichan Valley, and I will be back to that huge list of tasks to complete before friends and plant shoppers visit our garden. This trip with friends was planned long before the ARS Convention, the CVRS Plant Sale, and the CVRS Garden Tour presented themselves on my calendar. I must have thought I was younger and stronger than I am -- or I lacked foresight, being an idealist by nature.

Before leaving home I had researched for botanical gardens near Puerto Vallarta and found one that I was determined to visit. My friends were not interested so I planned to go alone.

Interestingly, the concierges knew nothing about the Vallarta Botanical Gardens, so I informed them. What I discovered was that the trip by taxi from downtown was 24 minutes, the public transport bus was 41 minutes, and the price difference was great enough for me to choose the bus over taxi travel. I would have to transfer buses at one point. I decided that was what I would do on Saturday. The oak tree and orchid collections at the garden were renowned. As we had planned to visit downtown Puerto Vallarta that afternoon, I would be able to orientate myself with respect to my connections for the adventure. I paid very close attention to every part of the trip downtown and became confident that my best plan was to abandon my adventure. I just was not Steve Hootman.

So, I studied the flora and fauna around me, relaxed, and enjoyed my remaining days at the beach. See you, and the plants that I recognize, soon.

Verna



Tabebuia guayacan

Every March, the forest scape bursts with color as the Guayacan trees start to bloom, producing a full crown of golden, tubular-shaped flowers. It is believed by locals that the Yellow Tabebuia Tree presages the coming green season—they are said to bloom one month before the rains start.

Photos: Verna Buhler



ANNUAL
PLANT SALE

COWICHAN VALLEY RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

Saturday, May 11, 2024, 10am – 1pm

**St John's Anglican Parish Parking Lot,
Jubilee Street, Duncan, BC**

- ❑ SPECIAL RHODODENDRONS
- ❑ HUNDREDS OF COMPANION PLANTS –
Hosta, Peonies, Perennials
Companion Plants, Shade Plants
- ❑ RHODODENDRON TRUSS SHOW
- ❑ KNOWLEDGEABLE GARDENERS TO
ANSWER QUESTIONS
- ❑ SUITABLE PARKING AVAILABLE



Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society
SPRING GARDEN TOUR

Five Private Gardens Open to the Public

Saturday, May 18, 2024, 10am – 4pm

THESE ARE ALL RHODODENDRONS!!
Deer Proof Shrubs! You Should See Them Blooming!



\$20 Tickets (cash or cheque) available at:

**Dinter's Nursery; Buckerfields; Volume One Bookstore;
Crazy Daisy Garden Shop; Old Farm Garden Centre**



SNOW WHITE

***Rhododendron* ‘Snow White’ And the Seven Dwarfs**

This piece relies heavily on a delightful article written by Harry Wright in February 1989, while he was President of the North Island Rhododendron Society

~~ Verna Buhler

Recently, a friend purchased several rhododendrons from me, one of them, *R. ‘Dopey’*, one of the Seven Dwarfs, I told her. She found it interesting that there was a complete rhododendron set of the Seven Dwarfs. I, personally, grow only four of them, plus *Rhododendron* ‘Snow White’, but I have never run across ‘Sleepy’, ‘Sneezy’, and ‘Doc’.

During one of his rhododendron searches, Harry Wright became aware of some interesting rhododendron names – those belonging to the Seven Dwarfs. He tells a humorous tale about how he and his wife had purchased a concrete set of Snow White and the seven dwarfs for their garden when their children were leaving home. They were pleased with these replacements because they found them to be relatively undemanding and obedient, with exceptionally low maintenance costs. When he heard about the rhododendrons, they realized could now go one step further. Wouldn't it be even better to have beautiful living replacements for those children in their garden?

He began to search for the *rasicals* at regional conferences and plant sales. Over time, he came close to completing his collection, except for Happy. His search led him to *R. ‘Hoppy’* but not Happy. Could there have been a spelling error? Upon further research, Harry discovered an answer: when the hybridizer was registering the names of these rhododendrons, the name Happy had already been used, and so he decided to use something as close as possible to the name and chose ‘Hoppy’.

So, then, Harry had his dwarfs: Bashful, Dopey, Grumpy, Sleepy, Sneezy, Hoppy, and Doc. However, he was attempting to locate *Rhododendron* ‘Snow White’. The article does not tell us whether he ever found *Rhododendron* ‘Snow White’.

The Seven Dwarfs all have *Rhododendron yakushimanum* in their parentage, producing strong, low, and compact plants with good flower colour and form, and lovely foliage. Like their parent, they are all hardy to -5 F or -20 C, except for *R. ‘Dopey’*. *Rhododendron* ‘Dopey’ is tolerant to +5F or -15 C. All would grow comfortably in our area.

Rhododendron ‘Snow White’ is a beautiful rhododendron that received an Award of Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society in 1923. She has stunning, wide-open, pure white flowers, which she inherited from her fine parents, *Rhododendron griffithianum* x *Rhododendron fortune*. This cross is the same as that of the ‘Loderi grex’, and therefore would be as hardy as the Loderi rhododendrons.

I welcome information on finding the three Dwarfs that I am missing!



R. 'Bashful' Photo: rhododendra.com



R. 'Doc' Photo: rhododendra.com



R. 'Dopey' Photo: Paul and Linda Lawry



R. 'Grumpy' Photo: rhododendra.com



R. 'Hoppy' Photo: Verna Buhler



R. 'Sleepy' Photo: rhododendra.com



R. 'Sneazy' Photo: rhododendra.com

Rh Sneazy

Seeing these lovely rhododendrons together on the same page and recognizing that they are all tolerant of both sun and cold due to their common *Rhododendron yakushimanum* parentage, has sparked an energy in my mind for this grouping in my own garden.

Verna

What's in a Name?

By Alan Campbell

In the 1750's when Carl Linnaeus undertook the classification of plant taxonomy along with his contemporaries, the need for standardization was realized. Having biologists and botanists in various countries speaking different languages it was decided that taxonomic nomenclature would be in Latin as it was a common language among scholars.

Unfortunately for us neophytes to the Genus *rhododendron*, we can find this confusing if not completely mystifying. Hopefully, I can shine a glimmer of light into this word puzzle.

I'll start with the second word seen in many genera and species, '*japonica*'; it simply means that the plant is from Japan. The two words '*sino*' and '*sinensis*' both indicate that the plant is from China. An example here is *R. falconeri* which is from places such as Nepal and Bhutan whereas *R. sinofalconeri* is found in the Province of Yunnan in China. Yes, they do differ enough to give them separate species classification. A suffix to many species names is '*ense*' which simply indicates where the plant is indigenous, thus *R. tsangpoense* is found near the Tsangpo River in China, whereas *R. manipurens* is found in Manipur, India.

The Latin words for colours are used for species descriptions as well. The word '*lutea*' (yellow) is found in *R. luteum*, *R. lutescens*, as well as *R. luteiflorum*. The colour red is used in a couple of different ways, '*rubra*' is used in variations with *R. rubiginosum* and *R. rubrolineatum* being just two. The second Latin used for red is '*sanguine*' and is found in the species *R. sanguineum*. The colour white, '*alba*', is seen in *R. albiflorum* (white flower). The Latin word for large, '*mega*', can be seen in *R. megacalyx*.

The suffix to some species is '*oides*' which simply means 'looks like'. Which gives us *R. recurvroides* that looks like *R. recurvum* and *R. valentineoides* that looks like *R. valentinianum*. An interesting side bar to this came about in the 1880's. The John Waterer family in England were running two plant nurseries, Knaphill and Bagshot, where they were well into hybridizing. Knowing that many of their well-heeled clients had a penchant for newly discovered species they advertised a plant call '*Chionoides*', a species sounding name but actually a *R. ponticum* hybrid. Seems marketing ploys have been with us for quite some time.



**Beautiful broadly rounded truss of
Rhododendron 'Chionoides'**
Photo: Boris Bauer

The naming and the classification of rhododendron species is undertaken with precision and systematic adherence at The Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, and Kew. It is interesting to note that in *The Encyclopedia of Rhododendron Species* written by the father and son team, Peter and Kenneth Cox, they acknowledge the “cultural/scientific imperialism that was implicit in the taxonomic decisions made by Westerners, over the last 250 years, with no or little consultation with people of the countries where the plants grow wild.” This is changing and hopefully co-operation will become the norm.

When it comes to the names of hybrid rhododendrons of which there are roughly 30,000 and counting, the registering of names is done through the Royal Horticultural Societies International Rhododendron Registry. Should a hybridizer decide to name one of his or her plants, imagination is the only limitation. From Charles Dexter’s ‘Alice in Wonderland’ to Clint Smith’s ‘Woody’s Friggin Rigg’in’, you see that a name can be anyone’s choosing. The only caveat should you choose to register the name, is that the name cannot already be in use.

The naming of rhododendron species and hybrids along with maintaining the name when planting it in your garden is of utmost importance. The next time you visit Bernie’s nursery, please don’t march up to him and ask for ‘that red rhodo that is growing in Al and Liz Murray’s garden’. Bernie will still give that smile of his, while gritting his teeth, and try to help you out, but make his day easier by having the specific name on hand.



Challenge Your Understanding!

What can you determine from this rhododendron’s name?

The answer can be found somewhere in this newsletter, but it won’t be easy!!



Rhododendron 'Van Es Sensation'

MAY . . . the Perfect Month for shopping for Rhododendrons

- Prime blooming period for hundreds of rhododendrons
- Plentiful Plant Sales and Garden Shows
- Ideal planting period

MAY is the prime time to see hundreds of rhododendrons in bloom. Walking through gardens and nurseries in May is like walking inside a rainbow.

And what a perfect time for garden tours! Living kaleidoscopes - constantly shifting and changing sequences of shapes, colours and textures!

In May, Garden Shows and Plant Sales abound and display arrays of rhododendron trusses. It is a perfect time to select favourites in the displays and then look for those rhododendrons, or similar ones, on the sales tables.

CONSIDER MORE THAN FLOWER COLOUR!!

**Review those many characteristics by revisiting the
CVRS Newsletter Volume 33:4 April 2022**

<https://cowichanrhodos.ca/newsletter-archive/CVRS%20Newsletter%20April%202022.pdf>

Rhododendron gardeners are extremely knowledgeable about rhododendron characteristics such as flower colour, foliage, growth habit, bloom times and hardiness, and can help you make difficult decisions when you are faced with too many options. Ask questions!



UNLIMITED OPTIONS!



MAY . . .
the perfect time
to find special
COMPANION
PLANTS



Find those stunning foliage "keepers" like the bright fern, *Polystichum setiferum polyblepharum* 'Bevis' and a perfectly formed blue-green *Hosta*.

The white spotted foliage of *Pulmonaria* peeking out from behind the fern (above) blooms with delicate blue, pink and mauve flowers.

Create heart stopping awe by combining these with the designer-silver of *Brunnera* 'Looking Glass' and 'Silver Heart'.



You may love the complexities and frilliness of Peony hybrids, but you may be surprised with the impact of *Paeonia species* such as *rockii*, *tenuifolia*, *ludlowii*, *delavayi*, *veitchii*, and *lutea*, among others.

For one thing, the foliage offers a great deal of variation and interest, as do the growing habits of the species. Some grow exceptionally large and others perfectly compact and mounded. Some species have fern-like foliage, while others are unique enough to make one question whether they are really peonies.



In any case, taking a closer look at the species *Paeonia* may send you in a new direction in your search for companion plants.





Unground hidden treasures such as bulbs, tubers, and corms are easily overlooked in our search for companion plants. However, they are indispensable for this purpose as they require little planting space, yet transform a greening, post-rhododendron garden bed into extended periods of kaleidoscopic colours. Consider the sequential starring periods of anemone, agapanthus, begonia, irises, and lilies.



Lillium souliei, comfortable in the company of a rhododendron, is a species lily named for Abbe Soulie, a missionary who collected plants while in China. However, this plant was not known as a *Lillium*, until 1950. (Photos left and right above)

It was first described in 1898 as *Fritillaria souliei* by Adrien Franchet, a botanist who identified plants collected by Delavay, Soulie, and other plant explorers. However, much later, Sealy recognized it was not a *Fritillaria*, but a very unusual lily and transferred it to *Lillium*.

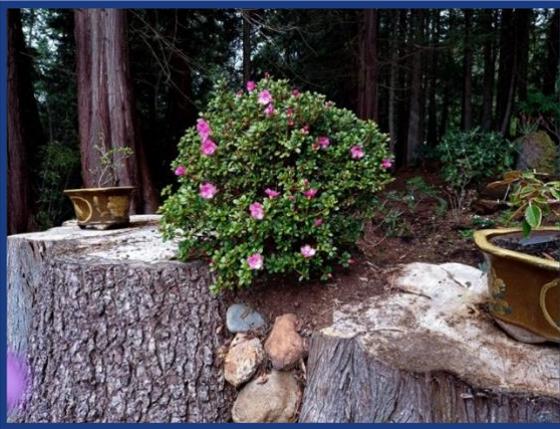
Even when you know the plant is a lily, it still looks most like a *Fritillaria*.

Soulie also discovered a very hardy rhododendron with flowers of exquisite shape set off by foliage of a rich sea-green. It has been awarded a First Class Certificate on three occasions.



CVRS Members visited two fabulous gardens in April Rafferty and Massa Gardens

On our arrival at the Rafferty Garden,
Brenda delighted us with her scrumptious
baking and coffee!



Sean willingly shared as much of his vast knowledge
about species as we could absorb! Or tried to
absorb! He coordinated a special guest appearance of
John Verwolf (left), who is revitalizing the *Hirsutum*
data base by building rhododendra.com

Sean plants small
rhododendrons,
that thrive in well-
drained locations,
in small pockets
of soil and moss
on stumps and
rocks.



Thank-you,
Alan for
organizing this
exceptional
visit to two
special
gardens.



Fern ground cover (*Adiantum?*) beneath
R. cillifatum x bullatum x ciliicalyx

What a wonderful way to witness the diversity and adaptability of the *Rhododendron* genus! At Sean and Brendan's Garden, *Rhododendrons* thrived in an open landscape exposed to wind and sun, overlooking the Pacific Ocean. In the Massa Garden *Rhododendrons* thrived in a terrain of ravines and rocky knolls.



From paths winding through this undulating terrain, *Rhododendrons* could be viewed from above, at eye-level, or from below.



Text and Photos: Verna Buhler

A wonderful and informative day all around!

Rhododendron species to look for at the CVRS Plant Sale

We have many varieties but only a few of each.



Left clockwise:

- R. degronianum*
- R. argyrophyllum*
- R. smithii* (or Smithii Group)
- R. augustinii* 'Marine'
- R. hanceanum*



SPRING PLANT SALE



April 27 & 28
9 am to 4 pm

Master Gardeners On Site
10% off for Members
Many Unique Plants Propagated from the Gardens

A background image for the Plantaholics Plant Sale featuring various green and yellow plants.

2024
**Plantaholics
Plant Sale**

May 25th, 2024

Time: 10 AM - 2 PM
Location: Brentwood Bay Nursery
1395 Benvenuto Ave, Brentwood Bay

2023 – 2024

Calendar of Events

Contact CVRS:

cowichanvalleyrhododendron@gmail.com

****Saturday, May 11, 2024, 10am – 2 pm**
CVRS Annual Plant Sale – St. John’s Anglican Parish Hall
Volunteers Needed

Saturday, May 11, 2024, 9am – 2 pm
Cairnsmore Place and Hospice Volunteer Gardeners’ Plant Sale

Sunday, May 12, 2024, 10am – 4pm (Tickets: \$45)
Victoria’s Mother’s Day Musical Garden Tour (10 gardens in Victoria)

****Saturday, May 18, 2024, 10am – 4pm**
CVRS Garden Tour – Five Private Gardens (Tickets \$20)
Volunteers Needed

Saturday, May 25, 2024, 10am – 2pm
Victoria Plantaholics Sale
Contact Bryan Emery at bryanemery85@gmail.com

Saturday, June 1, 2024, 10:30am
Pruning and Pinching Workshop
Dorothy Kennedy’s Garden

Saturday, June 8, 10 am – 2pm
75th Diamond Jubilee Mill Bay Flower and Garden Show
NA

Sunday, October 27, 2024, 10am – 3:30pm
2024 Fall into Gardening ‘*Planning for the Future*’
Qualicum Beach Civic Centre

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:

lindaquilkeson.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)
Duncan, B.C.

Email:

cowichanvalleyrhododendron@gmail.co

2022 - 2023 Executive

President: *Barrie Agar*
Vice-President: *Dorothy Kennedy*
Treasurer: *Elisabeth Zoffman*
Secretary: *Mary Pike*
Director-at-Large: *Sandy Campbell*
Director-at-Large: *Janice Moseley*
Director-at-Large: *Laurie Moseley*
Director-at-Large: *Tricia Guiguet*
Membership Chairperson: *David Annis*

Convenors

Tea: *Joyce Rodgers*
Raffle: *Hilda Gerrits*
Speaker Team Chair: *Sandra Stevenson*
Fundraising: *The Executive Team*
Sunshine: *Carrie Nelson*
CVRS Garden Tours: *Vacant*
CVRS Bus Tours: *Vacant*
Library: *Verna Buhler*
Newsletter: *Verna Buhler*