



*The Cowichan Valley  
Rhododendron Society*

*Celebrating  
The First 25 Years*

Ian E. Efford  
Editor  
December 2013



<b>Year</b>	<b>Presidents</b>
1989	Kathy Millar
1990	Stan Groves
1991	Stan Groves
1992	Stan Groves
1993	Allan Murray
1994	Allan Murray
1995	Charlie Raymond
1996	Charlie Raymond
1997	Margaret deWeese
1998	Margaret deWeese
1999	Janet Gardener
2000	Janet Gardener
2001	Ian Anderson
2002	Ian Anderson
2003	Alan Campbell
2004	Alan Campbell
2005	Alan Campbell
2006	Ingeborg Woodworth
2007	Ingeborg Woodworth
2008	David Annis
2009	David Annis
2010	David Annis
2011	Ian E. Efford
2012	Ian E. Efford
2013	Sandra Stevenson



### **The CVRS Gavel**

It was presented to the Society in 1990 by Ken and Dot Gibson of Tofino and is made from the wood of the rhododendron hybrid “Robin Hood” [Greig].



## THE AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY



Congratulations on the occasion of the Chapter's 25th Anniversary and best wishes for continued viability in a very challenging environment. Special thanks to those who have stepped forward and served the membership as Chapter Officer or Committee Chair. Without your efforts, I'm afraid there would be no Anniversary to celebrate.

With warmest regards,

Bruce Feller  
President, American Rhododendron Society



Congratulations to the Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society on their 25th anniversary. Over the years Madeleine and I have become friends with many of you and attended many of your meetings. It seems that your CVRS is a little younger minded crowd than we have in Victoria and it is nice to come to a meeting that is structured differently. We have enjoyed many of your speakers and actually kind of stole some of them and had them speak in Victoria. Your members and executive are always working to make the ARS better with many successful bus tours and now your new format for the spring show and sale is proving very rewarding. We were very fortunate to meet some of the founding members of the CVRS, as when your club was still new, many of them still travelled to VicRS meetings. Dave Dougan, Stan Groves, Peter Kearns. These are some of the stalwarts that got the CVRS off the ground and I am very sure they are proud to see that your chapter is now celebrating its 25th anniversary.

All the best and wishes for success during the next 25 years.

Ken Webb  
Director, District 1 British Columbia

## INTRODUCTION

The Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society was founded in 1988 when a collection of enthusiasts decided to bud-off from the Victoria Rhododendron Society and establish a new branch of ARS in the Valley. Anyone who has driven the fifty kilometres over the Malahat from Duncan to Victoria, especially on a dark rainy night in winter, will understand the reasoning behind such a step.

It is fitting that in our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary year we celebrated our successes with a grand picnic, held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> June in Maria and Siggi Kemmler's garden, and also with this small publication. Reading through the society minutes of the last 25 years makes one realize the very large number of members who have volunteered in one way or another to keep the society running smoothly. Examples include the treasurers, editors, plant sale coordinators, etc. It is unfortunate that they cannot all be celebrated in this short history. Those mentioned were chosen because they have provided the leadership and set the direction for a quarter of a century. We have retained the files, newsletters and photo albums so that a more detailed history can be written by someone more qualified to undertake such a task.

I have tried to identify the key players and their roles and some of the non-members who have been particularly active in supporting our establishment in the early years. If I have missed someone, I am very sorry. I should note that one of the problems that I faced in selecting photographs was the age of the person at the time it was taken. Which photo should I use? I usually chose the one where the person was smiling and obviously enjoying being a member of CVRS.

The subjects covered are my own choices but I hope that they encompass the main activities of the society. There will be different highlights in the future and new people taking a leadership role. I wish them well.

Thanks are due to the people who provided photographs and snippets of information and reviewed the text. In particular, I would like to thank Sally Smith, a well-known gardener and local historian for her help in hunting down photographs of some of the original members.

Ian E. Efford

December 2013

\* This document will be available electronically on the society website. That version will contain corrections that are discovered after publication, Please send corrections to [efford@shaw.ca](mailto:efford@shaw.ca)

The Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society  
A Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society  
P.O. Box 904, Duncan, British Columbia, V9L 3Y3 <http://cowichan.rhodos.ca>



## THE ORIGINS

The CVRS took shape in 1988 - and a membership list was prepared later in that year. Regular newsletters started the following year. The group obtained its chapter status in 1989. Original members like Fred Collins, Etta Cook, Daphne Jackson, Peter Kearns and Stan Groves who lived at the south end of the Cowichan Valley and grew rhododendrons, had been going to the Victoria Rhododendron Society meetings and decided there was probably enough interest here to warrant a separate club and it wouldn't be too hard to round up enough potential members - 12 had to be signed up. There were people like Dave and Lurana Dougan and Peter and Pat Stone, who were close friends and had been going to ARS conventions for years, Fred Collins, an early member of the Vancouver and Victoria chapters, Vic and Joan Clarke, Roger and Anne Slaby, and Frank and Leslie Drew who already belonged to the Victoria club and might wish to take out full membership in a Cowichan chapter (Some did, and others chose to be associate members.).

The idea of formation of a separate club here was largely associated with the Victoria club hosting its first ARS convention, the 45th annual convention, held April 26-30, 1989, in the new Convention Centre there. Dave Dougan was president of the Victoria club at that time and we were working full out with the convention chair, Norman Todd, on arrangements. One of the convention highlights was a tour of the Stones' rhododendron garden

on Quamichan Lake and a salmon barbecue organized by the North Island chapter. (I was on the Victoria club executive doing convention publicity.) Anyway, all of us pitched in - several were tour bus guides - Stan Groves for one.

Bill Dale of the Victoria club was very helpful in the CVRS organizing. As you'll see from the newsletters experienced growers like Dave Dougan and Peter Kearns and Norman Todd gave talks at the early meetings and contributed articles to the newsletters.

Some of the original members can give some amusing details of the setting for the first Brae Road meetings in part of a funeral parlour!

Leslie Drew



*Funeral Home Annex on Brae Street where the first Meetings took place.*



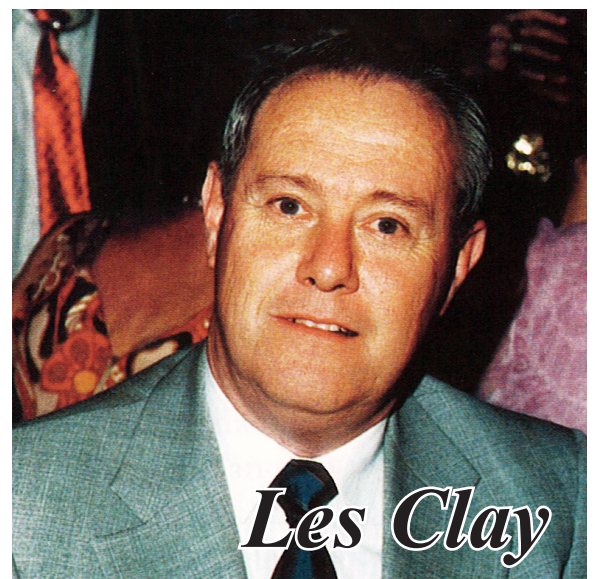
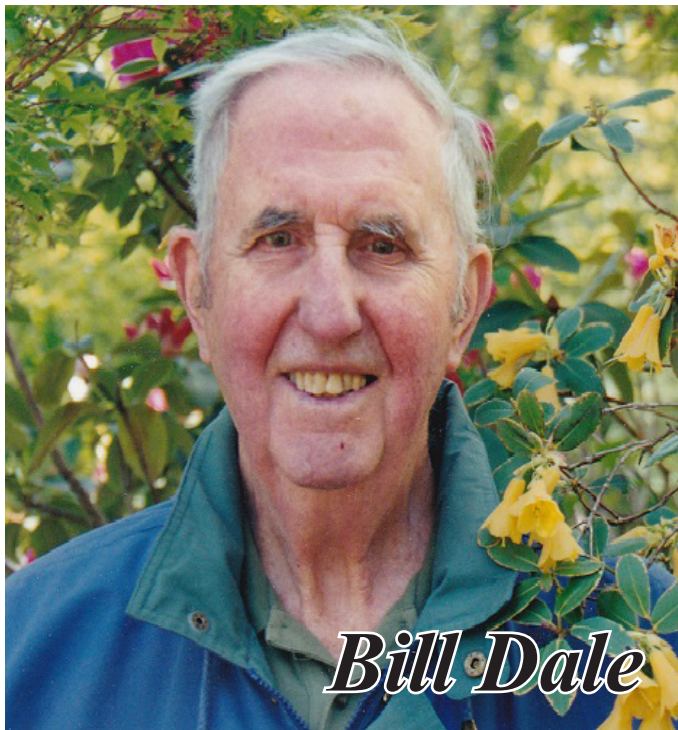
*Fred Collins  
Bronze Medal 1993  
Silver Bowl 1990*

*A little known fact about the history of our society is that in November 1989 the Victoria Rhododendron Society gave us \$500 to help with the initial cost of our establishment.  
Thanks Vic.R.S.!*



## EARLY FRIENDS OF CVRS

In particular they provided advice or took the trouble to make frequent visits to give lectures or take part in our early plant sales.





## OUR LEGAL STATUS

CVRS was established under the “Society Act” and the Certificate of Incorporation was issued on the 20<sup>th</sup> July 1989 [#S-25194]. The members who applied for incorporation were:

Katherine Vera Millar  
Thomas Stanley Groves  
Frederick Wellband Collins  
Beverley Ann Mountain  
William Victor Clarke

The witness in each case was Leslie Drew.

Accompanying the Incorporation was the Constitution which included the by-laws.

The first purpose of the Society was:

“To encourage interest in and the dissemination of information and knowledge about the genus rhododendron, and to promote a medium through which a person interested in the genus rhododendron may communicate and cooperate with others of like interest through educational and scientific studies, meetings, publications and similar activity.”

Another purpose was:

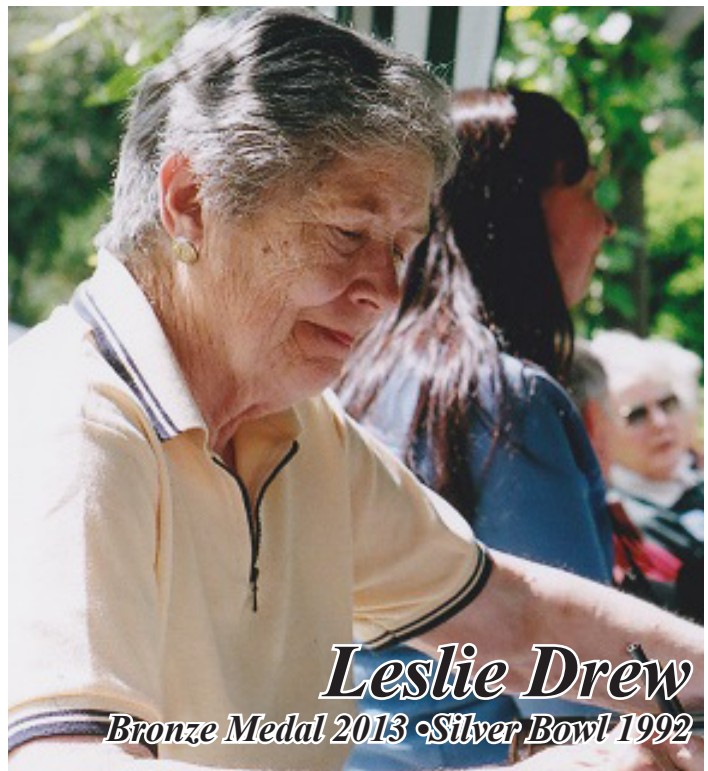
“To affiliate with any other society or body of cognate or allied interests for the enhancement and advancement of the objectives above described and in particular to affiliate with the American Rhododendron Society.”

In 2008, led by Janet Gardner, at that time Second Vice-President and Executive Secretary, the by-laws were revised and a vote of approval taken on the 7<sup>th</sup> May of that year. This effort was to bring the by-laws up-to-date, for example, to allow communication by e-mail and to match our year to that of the ARS.

Anyone interested in examining our present constitution and by-laws can find them on our website at <http://cowichan.rhodos.ca/wp-content/uploads/file/CVRS%20Society%20Act.pdf>.



***Etta and Greg Cook**  
Bronze Medal 1994  
Silver Bowl with Ruth Cook 1998*



***Leslie Drew**  
Bronze Medal 2013 • Silver Bowl 1992*

## THE FIRST CVRS MEMBERSHIP LIST

### APPLICANTS FOR A NEW ARS BRANCH DECEMBER 1988.

\* Jean Bazett  
**Shirley Campbell**  
**Gary Cline**  
**Fred Collins**  
**Audrey Combs**  
**Etta and Greg Cook**  
\* Leslie and Frank Drew  
\* Sandra and Trevor Evelyn  
**Blair Fairweather**  
**Stan Groves**  
**Daphne Jackson**  
**Peter Kearns**  
**Chris and Joan Kolk**  
\* Michael Langkammer  
**Kathy Millar**  
**Beverley Mountain**  
**Roger and Anne Slaby**  
**Peter and Pat Stone**  
**Carroll Whyte**

### ADDITIONAL MEMBERS IN THE FIRST CVRS, ARS LIST MAY 1989

Jim Cavers  
**Victor and Joan Clarke**  
**Anne Collins**  
Sarah Collins  
\* Bill Dale  
\* Dave Dougan  
Jo Ann Foster  
**Mary and Fred Gale**  
\* Ken Gibson  
Edna Green  
Neil and Beverly Holmes  
\*Pat and Everett Jefferson  
Barbara Jordan  
Merry Merchant  
Allan J. Murray  
Mary Oscar  
Betty Proctor  
Ann Springford  
\* Norman Todd  
Linda Westwood

Names in **bold** indicate ARS members at the time. Names with an \* indicate associate members, who are also members of another branch of ARS Edna Green and Mary Oscar were local members

Since 1989 the membership has fluctuated from the initial 20 to 1992 when we had 82 members. In 2007, Ken Webb accepted, on behalf of the chapter, the ARS award for the highest membership increase out of 71 chapters with less than 50 members”.



## AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY AWARDS

### Gold and Silver Medal and Pioneer Achievement Award Citations

Gold and silver medals are awarded to Society members for outstanding service over a period of time to either the Society or to the genus Rhododendron, or both. Gold awards are for contributions that have national or international impact. Silver awards recognize significant regional contributions. The Pioneer Award recognizes pioneering and original achievement in the advancement of rhododendrons.

### Bronze Medal

Granting of this award is delegated entirely to the local Chapters and is initiated as the Chapter governing body directs. The engraved medal is awarded for outstanding contributions to the Chapter, which may include accomplishments of the recipient outside the Chapter consistent with the goals of the Society. The honouree must be a member of the Society. The medal is presented with a framed citation.

### Citation for Services and Award of Merit

These are granted to individuals, groups of persons or organizations which would not otherwise qualify for medal honours. The recipient need not belong to the Society. The award may be initiated by the President or Board of Directors and shall be approved by a majority of the Board. The award shall consist of a text briefly describing the reason for it, written in calligraphic or other appropriate script, and delivered or bestowed at a suitable ceremony. These two awards can be made by ARS or by the local chapters.



*Peter Kearns*  
*Bronze Medal 1994*  
*Silver Bowl 1995*



*Joan and Victor Clarke*  
*Bronze Medal 1995*

## ARS MEDALS AWARDS

Year	ARS Award Recipients	
	Silver Medal	Bronze Medal
1993		Fred Collins
1994		Etta and Greg Cook Peter Kearns
1995		Joan and Victor Clarke Stan Groves
1996		Allan and Liz Murray
2000	Dave Dougan	
2005		Ian and Doris Anderson Daphne Jackson
2006		Janet and David Gardener Roger and Anne Slaby
2008		Siggi and Maria Kemmler Ingeborg Woodworth
2009		Alan and Sandy Campbell
2013		David Annis Bill Dumont Leslie Drew

## MEMBERS OR ASSOCIATE MEMBERS WHO HAVE RECEIVED ARS MEDALS FROM ANOTHER CLUB

	Silver	Bronze	Club
1990		Bill Dale	Victoria
1990		Norman Todd	Victoria
1992		Leslie Drew	Victoria
1992		Dave Dougan	Victoria
1995	Bob Rhodes		Nanaimo
1997	Ken and Dot Gibson		Mount Arrowsmith
2003	Norman Todd		Victoria
2008		Ken Webb	Victoria



## CVRS AWARDS



***The Memorial  
or Silver Bowl***

Individuals who have made a significant contribution to the society are recognized by receiving the silver bowl, (which they hold for a year) a certificate of an Award of Merit or a Citation of Merit.

In the case of the Silver Bowl a plaque is attached to the base bearing the names of the recipients.

In addition, the names of members of note who have died are recognized in inscriptions on the side of the bowl.

### **THE ORIGIN OF THE MEMORIAL BOWL, COMMONLY REFERRED TO AS THE SILVER BOWL**

Jean Bazett was a founding member of the CVRS and Dorothy Shaw was an early member. The death of these two very active members prompted Allan Murray to propose the acquisition of a Memorial Cup, now commonly called the Silver Bowl.

“How the club’s Silver Bowl came into existence. Though it’s almost as old as the CVRS itself, it seems much older --such are the tricks time plays.

In 1990, my husband and I went to Birks in Victoria to buy this very handsome bowl on the club’s behalf for something like \$500, no paltry sum for a fledgling group. The club hadn’t much money on hand, but our annual plant sales brought in more than they do today, and the idea of a bowl being awarded annually to a hard-working member seemed a good one. Here was something useful as well as ornamental, and what we chose was large enough to accommodate a single blossom of, say, one of Halfdan Lem’s great glories like ‘Point Defiance’.



***Liz and Allan Murray  
Bronze Medal 1996  
Silver Bowl 1997***

Our first Newsletters give the background. The Newsletter of November 1990 (Vol. 2 No. 9) stated the bowl is to be presented annually to a member who has done notable work for the society. The recipients’ names and the year of presentation are engraved on little plaques attached to the applewood base. Dave Dougan was chair of the first selection committee and all subsequent recipients have been selected by a committee consisting of those who have previously been awarded the bowl.

The bowl is also a memorial. Between embossed designs, are the names of members who have contributed to the genus in the Cowichan Valley, the first being Jean Bazett and Dorothy Shaw, who were close friends. Jean Bazett operated a nursery with a selection of rhododendrons, and Dorothy Shaw was an outstanding gardener and rhododendron enthusiast. Both encouraged rhododendron growing at a time when the genus was much less popular than it is today. To their names have been added, through the years, those of Pat Stone, Peter Stone, and Charlie Raymond, none of whom had received the bowl in the annual presentations.”

Leslie Drew

## MEMORIAL INSCRIPTION

A list of past members recognized for their particular contribution to the society are:

- 1990 Dorothy Shaw
- 1990 Jean Bazett
- 1998 Charles Raymond
- 2001 Peter and Pat Stone
- 2013 Etta and Greg Cook



**Dorothy Shaw** was born and grew up on the South Island of New Zealand. As a young woman she went to Britain to study music at the London Conservatory of Music. In 1935 she came to the Cowichan Valley to serve as the music mistress at Queen Margaret's School. A year later she married Ronald Shaw and moved into the house which would be her home for the next 50 years. There, she made a magnificent garden. She became very interested in rhododendrons and built a fine collection. She was very active in garden clubs as a speaker and as a judge, particularly of rhododendrons. She was one of the early members of the Victoria Chapter of ARS. She was also active in community affairs.



**Jean Bazett** was a close friend and former member of the Victoria Society, who used to drive Dorothy to meetings. She was the owner of Driftwood Gardens Nursery on Herd Road which had a considerable collection of rhododendrons.

**Bill Dale**

## AWARDS OF MERIT

- 2006 Joyce Gamie
- 2006 David Annis
- 2007 Anne Springford



## CVRS AWARDS

### RECIPIENTS OF THE SILVER BOWL

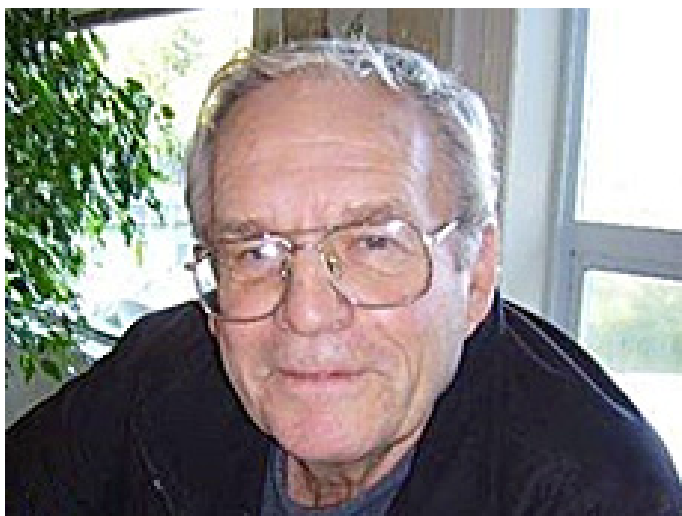
The Bowl has been awarded in almost every year since 1990 and a list of the recipients can be found in the following table.

	Silver Bowl Recipients	Citations for Service
1989		
1990	Fred Collins	
1991	Dave Dougan	
1992	Leslie Drew	
1993	Margaret deWeese	Peter and Pat Stone
1994	Stan Groves	
1995	Peter Kearns	
1996	Sandra Evelyn	
1997	Allan and Liz Murray	
1998	Etta, Greg and Ruth Cook	
1999	Daphne Jackson	

	Silver Bowl Recipients	Citations for Service
2000	Ian and Doris Anderson	
2001	Anne Springford	
2002	Ken Flett	
2003	Roger and Anne Slaby	
2004	Janet and David Gardener	
2005	Alan and Sandy Campbell	
2006	Joyce Gammie	David Annis Joyce Gammie
2007	Ingeborg Woodworth	
2008		
2009	Siggi and Maria Kemmler	Mary Gale
2010		
2011	David Annis	
2012	Ian E. Efford	
2013	Mary Gale	



*Joyce Gammie, Silver Bowl 2006*



*Ken Flett, Silver Bowl 2002*



*Ruth Cook with Etta and Greg Cook  
Silver Bowl 1998*



*Anne Springford, Silver Bowl 2001*

## HONOURED MEMBERS

1998	Edna Frances Green
1998	Gertrude Myers
2002	Peter Stone
2004	Bernie Dinter Sr.
2009	Etta Cook
2009	Leslie Drew
2010	Mary Gale
2010	Peter Kearns

## LIFE TIME MEMBERS OF A.R.S.

W. James Crawford

### “Local Green Thumbs Honoured by Rhododendron Society.

Outstanding gardeners of the Cowichan Valley were recognized Nov. 4 when the local chapter of the American Rhododendron Society marked its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Edna Green and Gertie Myers received honorary memberships in the Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society.

Edna, a founding member, is best known as a daffodil specialist. At one time Green grew more than 200 varieties, importing bulbs from the United Kingdom.

Whenever they were dug up and divided, the surplus bulbs would be sold to the public and the entire proceeds given to the hospital auxiliary. Green sold bulbs for more than 50 years, donating in all more than \$25,000.

Gertie Myers and her husband, the late Cedric Myers, created a garden at Honeymoon Bay which attracted plant

lovers from far and wide. Their hybrid rhododendrons, especially azaleas, all young when they planted them, grew to prime specimens under their care.

Beside having fine trees and shrubs, the garden was also home to *Erythroniums*, including *Erythronium japonicum*, Myers' favourite.

When Honeymoon Bay wildflower reserve was established the Myers gave full support. As unpaid wardens they kept the trails open and made sure that the plants thrived in their natural habitat.

The honorary memberships are the first to be awarded in the history of the Rhododendron Society.”

[Quoted from la local newspaper cutting.]

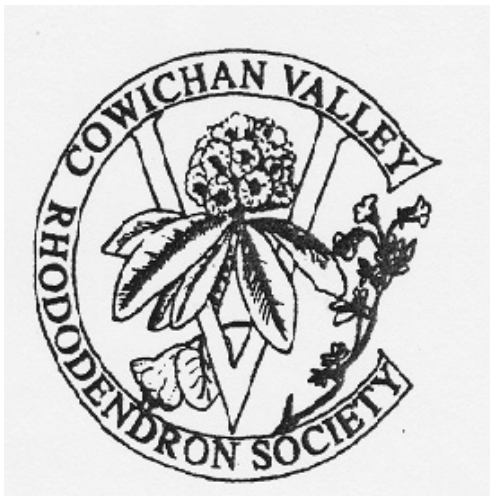


*Clockwise from above left: Bernie Dinter Sr., Edna Green and Gertrude Myers, Etta Cook, Peter Stone*



## OUR EMBLEM “COWICHAN”

### Old Emblem



The old emblem appears to have been initiated by a suggestion from Joyce Gammie. In the 4<sup>th</sup> February 1997 minutes of the Executive, it states “Joyce also suggested a logo for the club. She will speak about this contest at the January meeting. The designs will be displayed at the March meeting ... and the vote will take place at the April meeting. The prize will be a rhododendron plant.” The winning logo was designed by Margaret de Weese and it contained three species: *R. grande*, *R. williamsianum*, *R. lepidotum*. The first occurrence of the logo in the minutes is in the president’s report for 1996-97 to District 1. This report also indicated a web page was proposed and established by Margaret de Weese -<http://www.cow-net.com/cvrs>.

### New Emblem

Margaret de Weese proposed that as the 2000 Regional Conference was to be hosted by CVRS, the emblem of the society should be changed and based on the hybrid ‘Cowichan’. According to Alan Campbell ‘Cowichan’ is a *R. williamsianum* hybrid. Peter Kearns, a founding member of the Cowichan Chapter, visited the garden of Daphne Jackson, another founding member, from which he collected seed from various rhododendrons. Peter grew on



**Dave Dougan**  
*Silver Medal 2000*  
*Silver Bowl 1991*

numerous seedlings and from the *R. williamsianum* lot a third founding member, Fred Collins, evaluated and chose the plant he thought was the best. It was a unanimous decision to name the plant ‘Cowichan’. To be clear, the seed parent was *R. williamsianum* and pollen parent unknown.

Dr Alan C. Leslie, the Royal Horticultural Society International Rhododendron Registrar, has stated that the name ‘Cowichan’ has never been registered nor has our use of the name. He has made a temporary entry on the Register for the time being under the name ‘Cowichan’. It is proposed that, after the 2014 flowering, Alan Campbell will register this name on behalf of the Society.



## HYBRIDIZATION AND PROPAGATION

One of the most interesting activities of ARS members is the propagation and hybridization of rhododendrons. Over the years some members have been very active in propagation, for example, Roger Slaby, Peter Kearns, Fred Collins, Alan Campbell, Trevor and Sandra Evelyn, and Jean and Bob Rhodes. In particular, Bob and Jean Rhodes hybridized many Rhodos that we grow today. Peter Kearns selected Cowichan as described elsewhere in this history.

### Hybrids developed by members of CVRS.

Fred Collins: Orient

Super Lady

Annabelle (Alan Campbell will be registering this in the Spring)

Peter Kearns: Cecily Enid

Cowichan

Purple Pompom

Viddy

Dr. Bob Rhodes: Arlene Trustham

Bob's Blue

Bob's Favourite

Brianna

Camflo (a combined effort with Jack Lofthouse)

Captain Bob #1

Captain Bob #2

Dinty Moores

Gabriola Blue

Gabriola Glory

Haida Gold

Jean's Favourite

Jean Rhodes

Lillian Hodgson

Nathaniel

Norma Hodge

Norm Todd: Firwood's Best

Firwood Peach

These are the plants that have been named though not all are registered.

List prepared by Alan Campbell



*Doris and Ian Anderson  
Bronze Medal 2005  
Silver Bowl 2000*



*Ken and Madeleine Webb*

Unlike other branches, our propagation group is rather loosely knit and does not meet regularly although a number of members are active propagators and this is reflected in the steady stream of plants that are brought in for the raffle each month. Anne and Roger Slaby supplied rhodos for the raffle for years as have a number of members. More recently, Madeleine and Ken Webb, associate members of CVRS, have been particularly generous and usually arrive at our meetings with quite a number of plants for the raffle. As there is a limited number of plants one can fit into a garden, propagators exchange the extras with fellow propagators or pass them on to other members of the branch. All new members receive a free plant from the raffle at their first meeting.

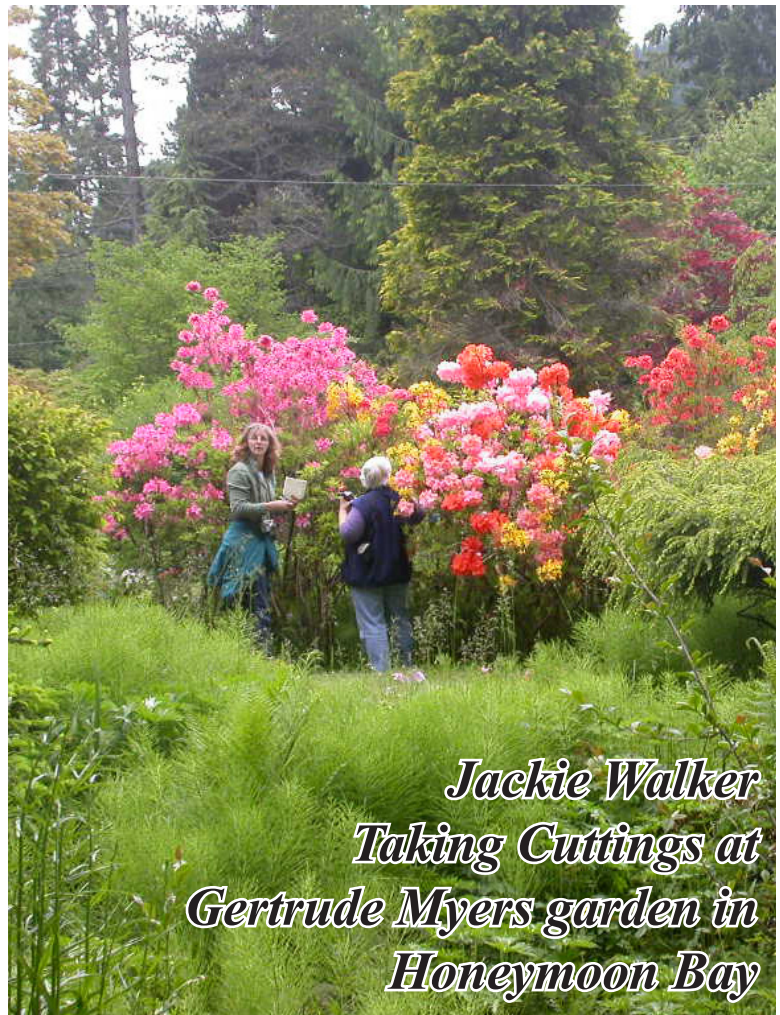
Interested members do turn out for special activities, however, and these include training programmes and trips to gardens to collect cuttings. These trips to collect cuttings take place about twice a year and visit gardens where the plants are well-labelled.

Recently, there have been two very well-attended training programmes in the district that attracted members from throughout the district and the US. One took place in 2010 at UBC “The Ultimate Rhododendron Conference” led by Douglas Justice. This focussed on all aspects of cultivation and identification. Attendance at this three day conference included a number of experts including staff from the Rhododendron Species Botanic Garden and ARS members from both Canada and the United States. The other, in 2012, a propagation workshop, again with experts from RSBG and elsewhere, took place at the Webbs’ home in Victoria. CVRS members were enthusiastic attendees at both these training sessions.

One thing is clear - any member who has been around a few years cannot complain of too few rhododendrons! The monthly raffles, exchanges between friends, free plants distributed at the picnic and other events and plant sales all result in the question “Where do I put this new plant that I must have!”



*Propagation Workshop attendees at the Webbs 2012*



*Jackie Walker  
Taking Cuttings at  
Gertrude Myers garden in  
Honeymoon Bay*





***Kathy Millar***  
***President 1989***



***Stan Groves***  
***President 1990-92***  
***Bronze Medal 1995***  
***Silver Bowl 1994***



***Allan Murray***  
***President 1993-94***



***Ian Anderson***  
***President 2001-02***



***Alan Campbell***  
***President 2003-05***



***Ingeborg Woodworth***  
***President 2006-07***  
***Bronze Medal 2008***  
***Silver Bowl 2007***





***Charlie Raymond  
President 1995-96***



***Margaret deWeese  
President 1997-98  
Silver Bowl 1993***



***Janet Gardener  
President 1999-2000***



***David Annis  
President 2008-10  
Bronze Medal 2013  
Silver Bowl 2011***



***Ian E. Efford  
President 2011-12  
Silver Bowl 2012***



***Sandra Stevenson  
President 2013-***



## THE LIBRARY

The CVRS has an excellent lending library with a wide range of specialized books and DVDs on rhododendrons and on companion plants and landscape design etc. In the near future, the catalogue will be available on our website.

What is not known by most members is how the library began. In 1989 Sandra Evelyn approached the executive with the request that she be allowed to sell plants she grew at our regular meetings. All proceedings from these sales, less the cost of the pots, would be used to purchase books and create a library for the society. She continued this activity for a number of years and generated a considerable cash flow. Thus, the library was created by the volunteer activity of one member.

Apart from the purchase of books and DVD's, the library has been enhanced by donations of special collections from individual members or their families. In particular, Fred Collins and W. James Crawford books have added greatly to the collection.



***Sandra Evelyn***  
*Silver Bowl 2006*



***Daphne Jackson***  
*Bronze Medal 2005*  
*Silver Bowl 1999*





## GARDEN TOURS

The Society has a long history of touring members' gardens each spring and in many years this activity has been shared with the Cowichan Valley Garden Club and sometimes the Mill Bay Garden Club. The result is that members visit a large number of the gardens in the Valley. We are also invited to take part in the garden tours of the other four ARS branches on Vancouver Island whose members have some spectacular gardens.

One of the first bus tours organized was during the first or second year of the club's existence. It was a visit to the UBC botanic garden where the tour guide was Peter Wharton. The bus used was the Old Legion Bus. Subsequent tours took members around Vancouver Island from Tofino to Campbell River and Victoria as well as to Salt Spring and Gabriola Islands has meant that members have been able to see most of the great gardens in the area. The scope of these bus tours has broadened to include touring the Vancouver area and the Fraser Valley and down into Washington State.

Recently, the main source of income for the society has become the annual bus tour which attracts most of its participants from outside our membership. The latest tour was an extensive tour of Whidbey and Bainbridge Islands and the area south of Seattle including a visit to the Rhododendron Species Botanic Garden in Federal Way. It resulted in over \$6,000 in profit.

Exchange visits with other ARS branches have added a social dimension to garden visits so that our members get to know their counterparts throughout the Island and from the mainland and Washington State.

Many members have enjoyed touring additional gardens outside our region and internationally when they attend the annual ARS conferences, held throughout North America, and international conferences throughout the world.

During these garden visits we learn about different rhododendrons, companion plants, garden design and propagation techniques as well as developing friendships with other gardeners. Often outcomes of such visits are plant exchanges which enhance our own gardens and return, private visits.



*Shirley Efford, Irene Hudak, and Marie Jacques in Carmen Varcoe's Saanich Garden*



## MORE GARDEN TOUR PHOTOS



*Sandy Campbell  
at Glendoick, Scotland*

Rhododendron Nurseries



*Liz Murray and another  
visitor in Wingswept  
Garden, Langley*

Over the years, there have been many nurseries producing plants and seed in the Cowichan Valley. For example, it was a world centre for sweet pea seed and, at one time, Duncan hosted an annual sweet pea parade led by a sweet pea queen. At the beginning of the 20th Century, one of the earliest nursery was run by the Stokers in Lake Cowichan who, along with the Simpsons, grew rhododendrons from seed collected in the Himalaya and maintained a regular exchange of plants with the Greig in Royston.

In the middle of the Century, one of our founding members, Jean Bazett, ran a nursery on Herd Road that specialized in rhododendrons. Since then, we have had two rhododendrons nurseries in the Valley. Mayo Creek Nursery in Cowichan Lake and Cherry Point Rhododendron Nursery in Cherry Point. The latter closed in 2013.

More recently, Joe Hudak in Chemainus has begun selling rhododendrons.

Other rhododendron nurseries can be found throughout the island south of Campbell River so that we have had no shortage of plants.



*Rhonda Rose, Sandra  
Stephenson and Brenda  
Dumont at Clayoquot Island*



## LINKAGES

CVRS has never existed in isolation and has maintained links to other rhododendron, gardening and charitable organizations within the Cowichan Valley and beyond.

### **Rhododendron Connections**

Other than the usual links to the other branches within District 1, the participation in workshops and offering volunteer support for regional conferences held by other Vancouver Island branches, our main links have been financial support or plant donations to other rhododendron projects in our extended area.

Past minutes of the Executive show that we have donated funds to a wide range of rhododendron activities. In particular:

- The American Rhododendron Society
- District 1 of ARS
- Rhododendron Species Botanic Garden
- Milner Garden
- Lake Cowichan Memorial Rhododendron Garden
- The University of British Columbia Botanic Garden, including a contribution to Peter Wharton's collecting trip to North Vietnam
- Government House in Victoria
- Pink Mountain Nature Reserve
- Judith Walker, towards the publication of a book on the Greig rhododendron nursery.
- South Appalachian Highland Conservancy towards the conservation of Roan Highlands, an area of extensive wild azaleas.

### **Community Connections**

Over the last few years, we have also promoted the planting of rhododendrons in well maintained public gardens in the Cowichan Valley Regional District. In each location we have donated the equivalent of \$500 worth of plants to the responsible parties with the understanding that they will maintain the plants. Recipients to date are:

- Vancouver Island University, Duncan Campus
- The Lake Cowichan Memorial Garden
- The Village of Crofton
- The Village of Chemainus, through Chemainus in Bloom
- The Community Centre of the village of Shawnigan Lake

All but one have resulted in successful public displays of rhododendrons.

We have also contributed plants to The George Fraser Memorial rhododendron plantings throughout the Village of Ucluelet on the west coast of the Vancouver Island and arranged for members to donate plants to Ecole Duncan and Cairnsmore Lodge. Donations have also been made to Finnerty Gardens, University of Victoria and Vancouver Island University [as Malaspina College]

More recently, our newsletter has contained articles promoting visits to the 20 of the 22 public rhododendron gardens throughout Vancouver Island.

## GARDENING CONNECTIONS

To establish closer links with other garden and plant enthusiasts within our region and to promote our society's activities, we have held joint meetings with both the Cowichan Valley Garden Club and the Cowichan Valley Naturalist Society. The cost of the speakers has been shared with the other groups. At the same time, our newly established Garden Fair, reviewed elsewhere in this volume, has offered booths to any garden club or plant society at a nominal cost in order to allow them to promote their own activities. The idea has always been to promote the activities of our own society and to attract new members.

For some years the society set aside the interest on its term deposits to be used to support a student from the Cowichan Valley studying horticulture. Although three students have received bursaries, overall, very few students applied so that we only supported one about every third year. More recently the interest rates have been so low that it was decided to roll the funds into our general revenue and not maintain a separate account. We remain willing to consider applications from students.

### Charitable Donations

Over the years the society has given regular financial and food donations to local charities usually as an outcome of our Christmas Party. These have included:

- The Hospital Foundation
- The Salvation Army
- The Food Bank



***Janet and David Gardner***  
*Bronze Medal 2006*  
*Silver Bowl 2004*



***Anne and Roger Slaby***  
*Bronze Medal 2006*  
*Silver Bowl 2003*



## LAKE COWICHAN MEMORIAL RHODODENDRON GARDEN

One of the outstanding rhododendron activities that the society has supported during the last 25 years has been the development of the Lake Cowichan Memorial Rhododendron Garden. This project is the result of the initiative of Ingeborg Woodworth, one of our past-presidents, and members of the Lake Cowichan Communities in Bloom. This group has led a very active programme to establish the garden right beside the visitors' centre in the middle of town. The idea was to commemorate the work of two families, the Stokers and the Simpsons, who were early residents of the area and who grew and hybridized rhododendrons using seed collected in Southeast Asia by the early plant hunters. At the time of Mrs. Simpson's death, her property was willed to the University of Victoria and many of the larger rhododendrons were moved to Finnerty Garden on the university campus. This created an excellent rhododendron garden in Victoria but eventually some of the plants became very large and crowded and a selection was moved back to Lake Cowichan to form the core planting of a new rhododendron garden on two acres of land donated by the City Council.

At the moment, the garden has a very good collection of rhododendrons and a request has been made to the local council for permission to expand the area across the stream in order to double it size. The number of rhododendrons within the garden has been expanding each year. CVRS has made two donations. The last was a collection of species obtained from the Rhododendron Species Botanic Garden in 2012. Communities in Bloom has a brochure listing all the plants in the garden and the name of the donors. The ARS has given two grants totalling \$2,500 to CVRS in order that Communities in Bloom can install drip irrigation to each plant. All plants are labelled with a number and steps are being taken to install name plates.

The work on this garden has been a community effort with members of the Communities in Bloom committee being assisted by Ingeborg Woodworth, her friends from France and Germany, and young students and scouts from the town.

The garden is an impressive commitment to the memory of the Stokers and the Simpsons and to the idea that flowering plants contribute greatly to the enjoyment of life for the local residents and visitors. This garden will become an excellent tourist attraction for the community as it is so close to the tourism centre of the town. It is strongly recommended that you visit the garden in the spring when it should be quite a show.



*Peter and Pat Stone, Citation of Service 1993*

## SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

During the year, two social activities take place which are not garden related the Christmas Party and the Summer Picnic. Both are social bonding events where one can get to know other members and exchange ideas and information that encourages long term participation in the Society.

### Christmas Parties

The Christmas Parties have been a regular feature of the December meeting and are a good social event where rhododendron related games are played and everyone brings a pot-luck dish to be enjoyed by those attending. Regular features are a food donation box and silent auction to collect food and money for the local food bank and the Salvation Army.

### Summer Picnic

Since very early in the Society's history a summer picnic has taken place in one of the member's garden. The last such picnic took place in June with the anniversary strawberries and cream picnic at in the garden of Siggi and Maria Kemmler where about 50 people gathered including quite a few past members.

It is not until one reviews photos of past picnics that one learns that some of them were quite exotic! The photos show various picnic including a display of Morris dancing by the Island Thyme Morris Dancers of Victoria at Ian and Doris Anderson's garden and a musical quartet, The Antoinettes, playing in the garden of Ingeborg Woodworth.

These picnics are an excellent way for people to meet members and their spouses they may not know too well and act as a glue to bond the society together.

During bus tours, the hosting club often welcomes the visitors with a social occasion such as a picnic. Through such meetings and the ARS conferences, our members have established a wide range of rhodoholic friends throughout the region, across the United States and around the world.



***Siggi and Maria Kemmler***  
*Bronze Medal 2008*  
*Silver Bowl 2009*



***Alan and Sandy Campbell***  
*Bronze Medal 2009*  
*Silver Bowl 2005*



## SOCIAL ACTIVITIES PICTURES



*Island Thyme Morris Dancers at Ian and Doris Andersons' summer picnic 2001*



*Picnic in Yvonne and Morgan York's garden 1998*

*from left: Joyce Gammie, Marilyun Boechler, Ken Flett, Peter Kearns, Daphne Jackson, Margaret de Weese, Janet Gardner.*



*Picnic in Mary Gale's garden 2011*



## THE PLANT SALE

The first Rhododendron Sale held by the CVRS was in the center of the Mall on Trunk Rd. it was difficult to man and the venue was changed to various church halls for the next few years and then to the Cowichan Exhibition Agricultural barn where the trucks could come in and unload making it easier on the vendors. Despite its logistical advantages, the barn was very cold and drafty where the wind blew through the open doors at each end of the barn and many volunteers were frozen by the end of the sale. This experience prompted a search for a more convivial location and we moved it firstly to St John's Anglican Church Hall, then to the basement of Providence Farm and then to the gymnasium at Queen of Angels School. Each hall was larger than the last and the buying public seemed to grow with the moves.

Unfortunately, at Queen of Angels, despite the expanded facilities, the crowd of buyers overwhelmed the volunteers, especially the cashiers. A new approach was necessary and the event evolved into a Garden Fair. With considerable trepidation, it was decided to rent the new Cowichan Exhibition Mellor Hall which was seven times larger than our previous location. At the same time, the format was changed dramatically and the event became a Garden Fair.

Without abandoning the rhododendron sales aspect of the event, the Garden Fair was expanded to become a broad area-wide location for other nurseries and retailers of garden equipment, etc. with the intent that we would become an annual regional garden event and attract more buyers. The main vendors remain the specialized rhododendron nurseries from Vancouver Island with a couple from the mainland. The total number of vendors now exceeds 30. As most of these returned after their first year, it appears as if it is going to continue to be a success. In addition, to help with the expansion of gardening activities and our own publicity, we provide booths to any of the non-profit garden or nature clubs in the Cowichan Valley with a booth at nominal cost [\$10].

So far, the Garden Fair has not proved to be much more profitable than the old plant sale but we have the potential to improve this situation as companies are able to purchase large booth spaces down the centre of the hall. So far, we have two sponsors and the aim is to have six. The income from these sponsors would cover all costs of the Fair and allow expanded advertising.

If nothing else, the Garden Fair shows that the Executive of the Society has not been asleep and is trying to move with the changing times!



*Top: A sponsors booth at the Garden Fair*

*Right: Garden Fair at the Cowichan Exhibition 2012*

One aspect of the plant sale that should not be overlooked is that, throughout the club's history, it is the only event which requires almost all members to volunteer some time during a 24 hour period. During most of the year, a few volunteers carry almost all the work but at this one event many hands are required at the same time for it to succeed.







**CVRS Garden Fair on the First Saturday of May**  
<http://cowichanvalleygardenfair.com/>

## THE 2000 CONFERENCE

In 2000 the society took on the task of hosting the Western Regional Conference of the ARS. This was a large task for a relatively small group but it went well with a lot of volunteer support from members and sponsorship from a great number of local businesses and individuals.

The conference took place at The Cowichan Native Heritage Centre and The Village Inn between the 14-17 September. Janet Gardner was President at the time and Dave Dougan was the chair of the Conference.

It should be noted that the Conference made \$12,000 in profit and \$1,000 was distributed to four organizations: District 1, ARS, The Rhododendron Species Botanic Garden, Milner Garden

## FINANCE

As with all garden clubs, most of the income comes from plant sales. This income fluctuates depending on the year. It usually hovers around \$1,000-2,000 but in 1997 reached \$7,000.

The society's assets were of the order of two or three thousand dollars until the 2000 Conference after which it rose closer to \$20,000. Depending on a variety of expenditures, our overall assets increase or decrease around this amount. At time some members have suggested that the Executive is being too extravagant with the club's monies. Despite these worries, at the end of 2013, the society assets were of the order of \$23,000 and we are not on the way to financial ruin.



***Bill Dumont with Rimfire  
Bronze Medal 2013***

## SHOWS AND COMPETITIONS

Almost all branches of ARS have truss shows and competitions. For the first 20 years we had regular judged competitions but that practice seems to have died out. Stimulated by an article in the ARS journal, I asked our Executive why this was and whether we should re-introduce judged truss shows. There was a resounding rejection of the judged competitions because of the very large amount of time and effort to set them up and undertake judging. This seems to be echoed by the membership which views gardening as a relatively relaxed activity devoid of direct competition. Nevertheless, our Garden Fairs now have a truss display right across the front of the hall so that the public can enjoy the display as they have their free coffee and doughnuts. Many then approach the vendors to purchase their favourites. We also have a people's choice competition where the public can vote on their favourite. Won in 2013 by Bill Dumont with Rimfire.



*Left: Joyce Gammie  
judging a truss show*

*Below: Truss show at Garden Fair*





**MEMBERS WHO RECEIVED MEDALS FROM  
OTHER ARS BRANCHES**



*Bob Rhodes  
Silver Medal 1995*



*Norman Todd  
Silver Medal 2003*



*Ken Webb  
Bronze Medal 2008*



*Dot and Ken Gibson, Silver Medal 1997*





*R. cinnabarinum* hybrid