



NEWSLETTER

Volume 20: 2

Editor: Ian E. Efford

February 2009

President's Message

Wow what a winter we've had! So much cold weather and so much snow! Who would have thought that with global warming we would have a winter like this.

Hopefully Mother Nature's 'pruning job' on your plants was judicious and your rhodies won't suffer too much. On a walk around my garden I was surprised to see how little damage I actually had. It's going to take some more time to see if the cold weather got any of the plants. Some of you that live further inland away from the ocean or at higher elevations probably have a lot more damage.

With the warmer weather, we can see the bulbs starting to peek above the ground. I have a primula that is sending out a blossom and the iris is pushing up leaves. Do any of you have any of the very early rhododendrons blooming yet?

The next few months for the CVRS are coming together. The speakers are lined up and the Executive is working at getting things going. The big event we still need to get organized is the plant sale in May. So far not much has been done on that.

See you at the meeting in February.

From the Editor

Leslie Drew suggested that I reprint the article by Roger Wiles as it sets forth very readably and succinctly the importance of the

What is Coming Up?

February 4th Wednesday 7.30pm

Bernie Dinter will speak on his visits to the well-known rhododendron garden of Peter Stone. He says that "On May 21, 2001 and again May 7, 2002, Peter Stone invited me to visit his 40 year old Rhododendron garden on Maple Bay Road. All the plants were labeled and I was able to photograph many of the varieties. Peter passed away about 2 years later. This garden of mature plants was well cared for and showed how well Rhododendrons grow in our area."

March 4th Wednesday 7.30pm:

Siggi Kemmler speaking on the Fall Conference in Hilo.

April 1st Wednesday 7,30pm

Don Martyn speaking on Magnolias in the rhodo garden

May 2nd Saturday

CVRS Plant Sale

May 6th Wednesday 7.30pm

Wanda McAvoy speaking on Fraser Days in Ucluelet April 29 to May 3, 2009.

April 29th - May 3rd

ARS 2009 Rhododendron Rendezvous in Everett, WA. [see below]

May 14 to 17 or May 21 to 24, 2009

Proposed tour of Washington State Gardens

The Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society

A Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society

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

Stoker/Simpson property on Lake Cowichan in the botanical history of this part of the world and the spirit of trust in which it was bequeathed to University of Victoria. The article was originally published in the Finnerty Garden Friends Newsletter and Lake Cowichan Gazette.

Another important article is a follow-up to the account of *Phytophthora* in the UK by Ian Wright. The article by Hedy Dyck summarizes the steps being taken to manage the disease in British Columbia.

Bill's account of Glendale Gardens in another in the series "Gardens you must visit".

Ian E. Efford

250-597-4470 efford@shaw.ca

Membership Renewals

Some people have not renewed their membership this year. To do so, please send your payment to our Treasurer, Judeen Hendrickson at 1765 Pritchard Road, Cowichan Bay V0R 1N1 or talk to Sandra Stevenson, our Membership Secretary, at the next meeting. **Only paid-up members will receive the newsletter after this month.**

CVRS Christmas Party

For those of you that attended the Christmas party you know what a great evening we had. The appetizers and desserts that we shared were varied and delicious and plentiful. We had a good time with the "raffle", although there were a number of people that weren't lucky enough to have one of their tickets pulled (that would be me! I guess that I was too busy drawing everybody else's numbers). Alan Campbell's game was a real challenge so we will have to 'bone-up' on our rhodie information for the next time he gives us one. There were a lot of people to thank for helping to make the evening a great success. Those people were thanked formally in my

email to everyone in early December.

The raffle generated \$265, which was split between the Cowichan Valley Basket Society and the Cowichan Valley Salvation Army. They were most appreciative when I took the cheques around to them on December 4th.

The Cowichan Valley Basket Society also received three large containers of food donated by members at the party and by the members of the Mill Bay Garden Club. Thank you to everyone for making it a success.

David Annis

Sunshine Cards

Mary Gale, our sunshine lady, asks that you inform her if you know any member who is ill or bereaved. She will then send a card from the society. She can be reached at 743-9329.

Rhododendron Rendezvous Everett, WA. April 29 to May 3, 2009.

The ARS Board meeting is on Wednesday, the 29th and tours start on Thursday, the 30th. There will be a half day of educational workshops on Saturday. For more details, please see the web site at www.ars-2009-convention.org. There will be on-line registration with credit payment available.

Don Smart, Convention Chairman,
Cascade Chapter

THE COMMON ROOTS OF AN UNCOMMON LEGACY

Roger Wiles

As gardeners we are often consumed by the minutiae of seeding, propagating, cultivating, pruning, tending, nurturing, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. The mundane chores are endless, and at times can seem interminably thankless. We toil in the moment, yet, we are ever mindful of our connection to a greater scheme.

As we weed and water, we also, with a hopeful spirit, plan to preserve this cultivar, extend that bed, and to anticipate seasonal changes. It was Jeanne Suzanne Simpson’s inner gardener that deliberately planned for the continuity of her beloved garden and Cowichan Lake lands. Mrs. Simpson’s vision and common sense garden planning would seed the extraordinary success that is now the University of Victoria’s Finnerty Garden. Her keen environmental awareness prompted a most noble gesture of gifting the University of Victoria with an ecological field station that soars in educational and experiential value as adjacent lands are debased.

While Mrs. Simpson and her late husband, Buchanan were bereft of children, she was not without maternal instincts. These were manifest in the caring for her plants and wild creatures and the land. Her bond with nature was profound. The peninsular property on the edge of Cowichan Lake was her 25-acre protectorate and sanctuary for over 55 years.

Starting in 1912, she and Buchanan lived aboard a “float house” as was the custom. From their rustic shack atop rafted logs, they developed a plant nursery business on the shore of Marble Bay that helped sustain them in their early years. It was a singular blend of circumstances that augured their pioneer success. Mrs. Simpson was university-trained in botany and their friends and mentors at Cowichan Lake, the Stokers, were very knowledgeable of the local flora and fauna and well connected with the international garden community.

2008-9 Directors

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

2008-9 Conveners

Librarian:	Leslie Bundon
Newsletter:	Ian E. Efford
Garden Tours:	(vacant)
Spring Sale:	(vacant)
Club Liaison:	Ingeborg Woodsworth
Raffle:	Judeen Henrickson and Hilda Gerrits
Membership:	Sandra Stevenson
Speakers:	Alan Campbell
Tea Coordinator:	Cynthia Gracia
[for 3 meetings only]	
Ways and Mean:	(vacant)
Website:	(vacant)
Social:	(vacant)
Historian:	Mona Kaiser
Propagation:	Alan Campbell
Sunshine:	Mary Gale

Amongst Cowichan’s earliest naturalists, Richard and Susan Stoker were instrumental in guiding and encouraging the talents of the younger couple. The Simpsons were invited to tie up their float house on the sheltered edge of the Stoker property and begin their plantings. To her final days, Mrs. Simpson self-effacingly wished all tributes to pass over her and rest with the Stokers.

It was this long, harmonious, productive association between the two couples that created a famed garden legacy, especially in the realm of species rhododendron culture on Vancouver Island. It was this bond and succession lived out over so many decades on this Cowichan Lake property, (Lot 29), which impelled Mrs. Simpson to think in terms of

continuity and a plan for the future. With the Stokers long gone and Buchanan's death in 1958, the urgency for this plan intensified.

Mrs. Simpson wished the property to be kept in as near a natural state as possible, to preserve the virgin forest and other undisturbed natural habitats. To this end, she sought the advice of trusted friends. Those friends included Yvonne and Trevor Green of Lake Cowichan, Mary Grieg of Royston, and Mrs. Roderick Haig-Brown of Campbell River. During this period of deliberation, she approached her friend and neighbour across the lake, Ed Roberts. Mr. Roberts was superintendent for the provincial Forestry Research Station at Mesachie. He advised that while the Department of Forests would certainly accept a gift of land, they could not promise to honour any sort of protective covenant.

Roberts then continued discreet inquiries on Mrs. Simpson's behalf that led to the involvement of Dr.

Marcus Bell of the Biology Department at the University of Victoria. Following an amicable series of negotiations, title of this historic property was quietly and without ceremony passed to the University in 1966 on the mutual understanding that it "be used by the University for scientific research, or study, in related fields."

The Stokers and Simpsons have passed on but their legacy endures because of Jeanne Suzanne Simpson's common, garden-variety determination. Thousands of visitors a year enjoy the Finnerty Garden on the Gordon Head campus which receive most of the exotic plants from the property in the 1970s. For more than 40 years, scores of students have had the privilege of learning in the midst of an outdoor classroom on the edge of Cowichan Lake. Other searching souls have found in this forest sanctuary a place of retreat and quiet contemplation.

How thankful Mrs. Simpson the gardener must be!



This unfolding June truss is from a remnant rhododendron plant on the Simpson property at Cowichan Lake. Most of the original exotic plant collection was relocated in the 1970's by the University of Victoria to the Gordon Head campus where it became the nucleus of the Finnerty Gardens. A few magnificent specimens survive at Marble Bay, some of which were seeded 90 years ago. A further historical tribute was paid to this colourful heritage, when the Town of Lake Cowichan created a new Rhododendron Memorial Park in May 2008.

***Phytophthora ramorum* in BC Current Situation**

**Hedy Dyck
Nursery Industry Development, BCLNA**

Phytophthora ramorum is a fungus-like disease that affects a large range of host plants. The most well-known symptom is the sudden death of oak trees in California and Oregon, from which the nickname 'Sudden Oak Death' or 'SOD' has been coined.

P. ramorum has been found in the wild in some counties of California and Oregon since the early 1990's. *P. ramorum* is found sporadically in nurseries in BC, from infected plants which have moved through the nursery system from infested sources elsewhere. *P. ramorum* does not exist in the natural wild setting in BC and there have been only periodic incidents in nurseries since 2003.

Where *P. ramorum* is found, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency enforces an eradication protocol that includes destruction of infected plants, as well as uninfected plants in the immediate vicinity, and remediation of the site to limit the risk of any disease remaining in the site.

Over 165 nurseries in BC voluntarily participate in the *P. ramorum* Nursery Certification Program. The *P. ramorum* Certification Program uses a systems approach, based on the guidelines of NAPPO's RSPM No. 24 (clean stock program) to minimize the risk of importing and transporting this pest. There are four main components to the program:

1. Implementation of Best Management Practices (BMP's) including bio-security processes in keeping with the risk level of the nursery
2. Development of a nursery certification manual outlining BMP's in place
3. Sampling and lab testing of a minimum of 40

samples of host plants for a minimum of two years, when Best Management Practices are fully implemented

4. An annual audit by an independent third party auditor to verify that the BMP's are in place.

The BC Landscape & Nursery Association is committed to working with nursery growers, regulators and government officials to limit the movement of this disease into BC. It is committed to protecting the environment, forests and gardens in BC through the implementation of this voluntary Certification Program. Nurseries from the US States have also come to BC to participate in the workshops to learn to use the tools to fight the disease in their facility. This program has been reviewed and used as a reference by other organizations like the California Oak Mortality Task Force (www.suddenoakdeath.org) to develop their regional programs and resources to help limit this disease in their jurisdiction.

BC nurseries participating in the program are listed on the web at www.canadanursery.com; click on 'Nursery Program', then click on '*P. ramorum* Program', then scroll down to the downloadable list to 'List of *P. ramorum* Certified Nurseries'.

For further information regarding *Phytophthora ramorum*, these are some useful websites:

Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)

<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/plaveg/pestrava/phyram/sodmsce.shtml>

California Oak Mortality Task Force (COMTF)

<http://nature.berkeley.edu/comtf/>

Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA)

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/planth/pramorun.htm>

For further information regarding the status of

the disease or the certification program in BC,
contact :

Hedy Dyck, BCLNA *P. ramorum* Program
Manager at hdyck@bclna.com

Trina Tang, BCLNA *P. ramorum* Program
Coordinator at ttang@bclna.com

David Woodske, Nursery Specialist, BC
Ministry of Agriculture & Lands: Phone: 1-888-
221-7141 or e-mail at
david.woodske@gov.bc.ca

Shane Sela, Canadian Food Inspection
Agency: Phone 250-363-3432 or e-mail at
selas@inspection.gc.ca

Rhodos and Gentians

Bernie Guyader *

Now do we say Rhodos and Gentians or
Gentians and Rhodos, I suppose that if you are a
rhodophile the first order would be yours. No
matter the order, they make a great combination.
(Companion plants anyone) Our garden is in
large part a rock garden with many alpine plants.
Whenever I read or attend talks on companion
plants, I am amazed that there is never any
mention of Gentians. I suppose, I maybe
prejudiced due to the fact that Gentians are my
favourite plants. I feel that the best companion
plants have the same horticultural requirements as
rhodos and bloom at different times, or
complement the rhodos when they are in bloom. I
think, possibly, the reason more people do not
grow gentians is because they have been told they
are difficult. I have found that if you give them the
proper conditions most of them will grow and
blossom happily for many years.

I suppose if we mention alpiners, we should first
consider the Rhodos that are native to the Alps of
Europe, which are *ferrugineum* found on siliceous
subsoil and *hirsutum*, found on calcareous subsoil.
We also have *Rhodothamnus chamaecistis*, which
was previously known as *Rhododendron
chamaecistus*. These are all perfectly happy on a
well-drained rockery, in full sun with a mulch of

5 to 8cm(2-3in) of shale or rock chips. I should
mention at this time I also grow *R radicans* on the
rockery, but on the north side in a more shaded
area. With the alpine rhodos you can grow
Gentiana in the acaulis group such as *alpina*,
kochiana, *dinarica* and *clussii*. *Clussii* in my
garden is more lavender than the usual deep blue
of the others. It may not be to everyone's liking.
These evergreen gentians with their large showy
trumpets, most of which are approximately 8cm(3
in) long in a deep rich blue, bloom at the same
time as the rhodos. The plant height is about
7cm(2.5in) with the flower rising up to 15cm(6in.)
above the foliage. They simply require a well-
drained, gritty soil in full sun. I top-dress them
with a handful of screened compost in early
winter. The compost is worked in by the winter
rains or even better by the melting snow. I think
most people lose these plants or have them do
poorly because they treat them too kindly. Giving
them too much moisture and fertilizer. Blooming
during the summer, given the same conditions are
Gentiana septemfida, *lagodechiana* and many
other gentians from the Alps and the Caucasus.
They are deciduous and grow to a height of 25-
30cm(10-12 in.). I also have a summer gentian
that I grew from seed I received from a seed
exchange. It is supposed to be "paradoxa". It is a
reat plant with some of paradoxa's features,
probably a hybrid, definitely not *paradoxa*. I
think it is the best summer flowering gentian I
have grown.

The following plants in our garden grow in a
raised bed about twenty feet by ten feet, on the
north side of our house. The Gentians, which
grow here where it is a little more shaded and
stays moister, are the August blooming *G.
asclepiadea*, or willow gentian. It comes in
many shades of blue and there is a white form,
which is a little taller. They have upright arching
stems to about 50cm (20 inches). They happily
hybridize and sow themselves through the
garden. The Asian gentians such as *G sino
ornata*, *ternifolia*, and their many hybrids,
bloom in September and October they are mat
forming with dark green foliage with large
trumpets from the darkest blue to white. These
are the easiest to propagate as they root where
the stems touch the moist soil. *G. paradoxa*,
from the Caucasus, is also fall flowering. It has a

long blooming period sometimes extending from August to October. It is more upright but does tend to trail. It is very attractive. Pale blue with dark stripes. They blend in well with *Cyclamen hederifolium*, both pink and white forms, which bloom at this time. When the cyclamen blossoms finish, the colourful foliage in dark green and silver carry on the show.

These companions are happily mingling with the rhodos. I am drawn to the dwarf and low growing rhodos, because they fit in so well with the over all scale and scheme of things in our garden. I much prefer the species but I have many hybrids as well. The species are *R. impeditum*, *keleticum*, *williamsianum*, *cephalanthum* and *psuedchrysanthum*. I have two *campylogynum* hybrids, at least I think they are hybrids, I got them from Tom Bowhan several years ago. One he named 'Ester Berry', which is very attractive, and 'Jade', which has dark shiny green foliage and a dark plum coloured bell blossom, is one of my favourites. With these I have some of the 'birds' from Peter Cox. Centred between two bright blue hepaticas, is *R. 'Ptarmigan'*. The hepaticas blossom slightly before Ptarmigan, but they are still in full bloom when the pretty white bells of the rhodo open. . 'Kim' another *campylogynum* hybrid is another favourite, even though Cox calls it muddy. *R williamsianum* with its pink bells is between *R. 'Ptarmigan'* and 'Egret', great contrast.

Also in this bed we have *Trillium hibbersonii*, a dwarf species native to Vancouver Island, about 5cm(2in.) tall with pink blossoms on three-inch stems and *Cyclamen coum* which blossoms in the spring.

One other gentian which I have in the garden is *calycosa*, it grows to approximately thirty centimetres, has a large tubular, light blue blossom. This is a North American native, which is found from British Columbia to California growing in meadows.

In conclusion, think Gentians, there are over 400 species so there's quite a choice. Many different colours and size ranging from mat forming to the 100cm(36 in.) *G lutea*, which is yellow and the root, is used to flavour Schnapps. I have mentioned the ones that are most likely available and the easiest to grow and they are the natural

companions to rhodos. You might have to search for them at specialty nurseries, one of which is Mt. Tahoma Nursery, but they are worth every effort. For more information read "Gentians" by Fritz Kohlein or "The Genus Gentiana" by Josef J. Halda

[* Courtenay resident Bernie Guyader, and his wife Gloria, have been members of the North Island chapter since the first year in 1985 and have attended several ARS conventions. In addition to Rhododendrons, Bernie has a keen interest in alpine plants, and has spent many summer days exploring the hillsides and meadows of Mt. Washington. One of Bernie's favourite pastimes is the training various trees in the art of Bonsai.]

This article was reprinted from the newsletter of the North Island Rhododendron Society.



Gentiana asclepianea



Gentiana brachyphilla



Gentiana tibetica



Gentiana cachmerica



Gentiana acaulis



Gentiana clussii

Edmund de Rothschild

Lord Rothschild died this month. He is famous for revitalizing the garden at Exbury in the New Forest between Southampton and Lymington in the south of England, one of the most famous rhododendron gardens in the world and one that is very well worth visiting if you are in England. Associated with this garden was a well-known nursery that supplied Exbury rhododendrons. This nursery recently closed because of the devastation of *Phytophthora*.

The Telegraph obituary mentions some aspects of his involvement with gardening and these paragraphs are reprinted below.

"Edmund de Rothschild, who died on January 17 aged 93, was senior partner and then chairman of NM Rothschild & Sons, and a figure of international renown in horticulture, especially in the field of rhododendron and azalea plant hybridization. After his return from the Second World War in 1946, Eddy de Rothschild set about the restoration of Exbury Gardens in Hampshire, the 260-acre woodland garden created by his father Lionel in the 1920s and 1930s. The gardens had been greatly neglected since Lionel's death in 1942."

"Over the next 50 years he replanted some three-quarters of the acreage, and produced several dozen new rhododendron hybrids. He also developed the highly successful Solent Range of Exbury deciduous azaleas, which are noted for their strength and colour. In 1955 he opened Exbury Gardens to the public."

"Well into his eighties, Eddy de Rothschild would hurtle around Exbury's network of garden paths (designed to be wide enough for his father's Armstrong-Siddeley) in a small car with the number plate NMR 1. He would stop the car to pass the time of day with the visitors, and liked to get out to hack off dead branches and blooms with a stout rhododendron-wood stave."

[Ed. I understand that the Exbury Garden

will be maintained by a public trust for the enjoyment of all.]

Volunteers

We need volunteers for some relatively small tasks. Without them, some tasks will be abandoned!

Glendale Gardens & Woodland

Bill McMillan

Glendale Gardens & Woodland is run by the Horticulture Centre of the Pacific, a not-for-profit society created in 1979 with the dream that Victoria could and should become a centre of excellence for horticultural education. In the years since, on 43 hectares of Crown Land leased from the Provincial Government, Glendale Gardens & Woodland has been created. The Society has over 2000 members who support the gardens financially; many also volunteer their time working in the gardens, on construction and maintenance and in administration. The Gardens have a small paid staff working in administration, education and in the Gardens.

Most of the land is vital green space and is designated as a conservation park devoted to the preservation of the native flora and fauna. The Glendale Trail, designed to allow access without damage to the ecosystem, is a part of the Saanich Centennial Trails Program and includes loops for birdwatchers and dog walkers. A wetland, known as Viaduct Flats, has become an important wildlife sanctuary and as part of the Colquitz waterway, is vital to the on-going restoration and enhancement of historical salmon habitats. A weir built in 2005 will help to maintain the water level. Later, an observation platform was built and gives birdwatchers a clear view of the many returning species. A pair of bald eagles

began a nest in the spring of 2008; an exciting indicator of the rebalancing of the ecosystem.

The year-round gardens of Glendale are beautiful examples of the potential inherent in every season. Glendale has an extensive and successful system of volunteer-directed demonstration gardens supported by local garden societies and individuals. The Doris Page Winter Garden, begun in 1984 in partnership with the Victoria Horticulture Society, is a world class example of an all-season garden. The Takata and Zen gardens show off Japanese garden style. A ceremonial teahouse, finished in 2008 completes the picture.

Vegetable gardens, orchards and a herb garden demonstrate sustainable garden practices for food production. The drought tolerant and Mediterranean gardens are designed to make the best of the challenging climate. The native plant gardens hold a wealth of native plant material that can be integrated into any garden. The children's garden is a great favorite for school tours and the birds; bees and butterflies garden shows how to attract wildlife to a garden. Gardens devoted to hardy fuchsias, heathers, ornamental grasses, lilies and irises complete the picture.

The rhododendron garden was created in 1985. Tucked into natural woodland where light ranges from full sun to full shade, hostas, hardy fuchsias and other perennials have been added for year-round interest. The wide selection of rhododendron species and cultivars also provide a variation of foliage texture, shape and colour, adding immeasurably to the overall interest of the garden. The heavy clay soil has required major amendments that were not adequately done at the inception of the garden. A much needed renovation began in 1994. Supported by the Victoria Rhododendron Society and supervised by Ted Irving, the work included digging in 15 cm of coarse sand and 30 cm of leaf mulch over the site. The plan also included improvements in the drainage. The current curator, Bill McMillan, continues this work with the ongoing support of the

Society and a small, dedicated group of volunteers.

Educational programs at Glendale include an accredited 10-month full-time Landscape Horticulture Certificate Program at Pacific Horticulture College, (PHC) and the Master Gardener and Junior Master Gardener programs. Under Community Education, courses are offered in a broad range of subjects, including a 30-session course on Sustainable Gardening. A new slate is offered every spring and fall with classes for the novice as well as the experienced gardener. Many have a practical hands-on aspect that takes advantage of the gardens and greenhouses.

Events at the Glendale continue year round; including semi-annual plant sales, a spring Heather Sale, The Arts at Glendale Gardens, a two-day event in August, and The Organic Islands Festival in July.

The Gardens, just 12 km from downtown Victoria, are open year round. In the summer, from 8 am to 8 pm- Monday to Friday, from 8 am to 6 pm on Saturdays and Sundays. The winter hours are 9 am to 4 pm.

General admission is \$10.00

Seniors over 60 & students \$7.50

HCP members' guests are \$5.00

The Christmas Crossword suggested by Roger Slaby seems to have been very difficult for members. This may have been because it was created in the eastern USA under different climatic conditions. The answers are shown below.



