



# NEWSLETTER

Volume 19: 6

Editor: Ian E. Efford

October 2008

## President's Message

Ah, fall! What a wonderful time of the year! Sunny days with crisp blue skies and chilly evenings. And with increasing numbers of geese traversing across the sky between Somenos and Quamichan Lakes and Cowichan Bay. Now that the fall activities are in full swing, we are back into our routines after the casualness of summer.

As your new President, I would like to first thank those people that have left the Executive and the Convenor positions of the Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society. You've done a great job! Some of you have been doing these jobs for just a short while and others like Ingeborg and Siggie and Maria have been at it a long time. Thank you for all the effort that you have put in. Please take note that there are still some vacancies in our roster that need to be filled. Think about how you might contribute to the CVRS.

Fall means memberships are due. Please make an effort to get your next year's membership monies into Sandra Stevenson at either the October or the November meetings. She needs to get the paperwork organized and a rather large bank money order into the mail in mid-November.

For those of you at the September meeting, you will remember that Alan Campbell (in his propagation talk) said that October/November is a great time to take cuttings. Didn't he make it sound easy to do them?

See you at the meeting. I am looking forward to Norma Senn's presentation.

David Annis

## What's coming Up

Next meeting will be held Wednesday, October 1, 2008. **Norm Senn** will give a brief history of horticulture in the Pacific Northwest. Her talk is entitled "**Walking in the Sasquatch's Footprints**". [see article below]

Next Executive meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 8, 2008 at the home of David Annis (#19 – 5980 Jaynes Road). Note this is a change from the newsletter calendar.

Ian Wright will speak on managing the phytophthora devastation in British gardens on the:

27<sup>th</sup> in Nanaimo and 28<sup>th</sup> October in Victoria. [see article below]

5<sup>th</sup> November, Ian Efford will speak about the International Rhododendron Conference in Edinburgh.

No meeting will be held in January due to low attendance number in past years.

## The Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society

A Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society

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



**Bob's Blue**, one of the recommended rhododendrons for Districts 1,2,3 along with **Lem's Cameo**, *R. luteum* and the evergreen azalea **Rosebud**. Photo by Eleanor Philp.

### "Walking in the Sasquatch's Footprints"

**Norma Senn** is currently a member of the Fraser South Rhododendron Society and an associate member of the Victoria Rhododendron Society. She served as president of the FSRs chapter for several years and was awarded the bronze medal for her work on behalf of the FSRs Chapter.

Norma retired from her position as Director of the Dept of Agriculture at the University College of the Fraser Valley a year ago (now known as the University of the Fraser Valley). During her 20+ year career at UCFV, she taught a wide variety of courses in horticulture, biology and even agronomy as well as heading the department. Previous to that, she was urban horticulturist and nursery specialist with the BC Ministry of Agriculture. As part of her responsibilities in this position, she set up the first Master Gardener programs in Canada. She continues to work with the Van Dusen Master Gardeners as a regular lecturer in botany and plant propagation.

As far as rhododendrons are concerned, Norma hasn't met one yet she didn't like, but

as she has just moved to a new and (sadly) smaller garden in Victoria, she thinks she will have to specialize in dwarf rhodies that can be tucked into existing beds. However, she is looking forward to trying to grow some of the slightly more tender types since she now has a true Zone 8 garden.

On Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> November, Norma will give a brief history of horticulture in the Pacific Northwest.. This presentation was originally prepared for the 2006 western regional fall conference at Harrison Hot Springs.

### Membership:

This year's memberships are due!

Most popular fees for memberships are:

Individual at \$35

Family at \$48

Associate at \$12

Memberships need to be paid at the October or November meetings or sent to the Society c/o Sandra Stevenson before the middle of November. See front page for address.

### Rhododendron Lake

June 14 members of the Cowichan Valley Naturalist Society visited Rhododendron Lake. An account include the statement "Near Parksville, we checked in at Island Timberlands gatehouse and proceeded on to logging roads that got progressively rougher. At the lake the Rhododendrons were perfect, some fully out and some in the shadier areas were still coming on."

## The Districts 1,2,3 picks for 2011

Elepidote Lem's Cameo  
Lepidote Bob's Blue

Deciduous Azalea *R. luteum*  
Evergreen Azalea Rosebud

[Editor's note: These recommendation were in a recent article but I have forgotten the source! I should also note that I have "Rosebud" raised from cutting taken from Leslie Drew's plant. She recommended the plant highly. On enquiry, I was told that it was not registered, however, at the International Conference in May, one speaker referred to three different Rosebuds! I intend to enjoy it even if mis-named.]

## "Seeds of Adventure"

I recommended this book highly in the last newsletter and suggested purchase from the Rhododendron Species Foundation for about \$80. As I mentioned at the last meeting, however, Garth Wedermire phoned me to say that he has found the book on **Amazon** at less than \$50!

Ian E. Efford

## Ian Wright's lectures

At the International Rhododendron Conference last May, the programme was interrupted and a special lecture presented by Ian Wright of the National Trust in the UK. The National Trust is the largest manager of gardens in the UK with over 200 gardens. It is also one of the largest in the world. Recently, some Trust gardens have been devastated by the disease *Phytophthora* which has wiped out all the rhododendron and thus destroyed the aesthetic appearance of many gardens because they acted as the "walls" of the various "rooms" within the garden.

I took the initiative to invite Ian to talk to gardeners in BC because the subject is so important and, because, the disease is present on the island and in the Fraser Valley. Many people, including garden magazine editors seem unaware of the potential problem.

Ian Wright will lecture in four locations Nanaimo, Victoria, Langley and Vancouver during the period 27-30th October. I very highly recommend that you car pool with garden friends and attend one of the lectures on the Island. He is an excellent speaker with top-quality slides. The details of the Island lectures are on the attached posters.

Ian E. Efford

### Tea and Goodies Teams 2008

October	Peter Lewis ☺ 746 7000	Liz & Allan Murray 743 9190	Joyce Maclean 746 4105
November	Anne & Roger Slaby ☺ 748 4623	Sharon Tillie 748 8254	Marie Jacques 743 5021

☺ Indicates the team leader

Please let your team leader and Cynthia know if you can't come to the meeting.

The team leader will bring ½ litre of milk.

The team under each month's heading will supply goodies, set up and make tea and coffee; are also responsible for the kitchen clean-up after the meeting. The teams should be at the hall by 7:15 p.m.

Cynthia will look after the kitchen supplies; if anything is needed or if there are questions or problems, please call her at 250 748 4072. She will also call to remind you the day before the meeting.



This picture was sent to Alan Campbell last Spring and was taken by Maddie Webb at her home in Victoria. It give new meaning to deer in the garden!

## Fall Planting is the Best

**Allan Anderson**

My strong opinion is that Fall, mainly September and October, is by far better than any other time of year to plant rhododendrons. Our experience supports this idea. I recall an early ARS Journal article that asserted that very little root growth occurs in Spring and early Summer while top growth is most active. In the Summer other changes occur while some of the buds become reproductive and then the main root growth begins in early Fall and continues until the ground freezes. Clearly, Fall planting takes advantage of this root growth period to become established in the ground and better able to survive the Winter.

Years ago we planted our new two year old seedlings in late Spring and suffered considerable losses in hot Summers. When we consider that the small root balls of small plants are only inches underground it becomes clear that they are quite vulnerable to drying out in the hot Summer sun, especially in our sandy loam soil. Planting out two year old seedlings in the early Fall has improved our results to a very large degree. It has also improved our results to irrigate in subsequent years with drip tape activated by battery timers on a thrice weekly schedule.

Of course mature larger plants may not need such careful attention since their roots are larger and better developed. However, planting at a time when fresh root growth can be expected and when Autumn rains will maintain the required moisture level has an important advantage over other times of year. How unfortunate it is that our Chapter plant sales, and most garden center sales as well, occur in Spring the worst possible time to plant new purchases. These plants can be successfully

established in Spring but they require special attention to careful watering for the whole Summer. Hard to do with the competition from other interests.

[Allan Anderson is from the Tappan Zee Chapter in District 7 and posted this note on the rhodo group website this month.]

## Estate Planning

Dan was a single guy living at home with his father and working in the family business. When he found out he was going to inherit a fortune when his sickly father died, he decided he needed a wife with which to share his fortune.

One evening at an investment meeting he spotted the most beautiful woman he had ever seen.

Her natural beauty took his breath away. 'I may look like just an ordinary man,' he said to her, 'but in just a few years, my father will die, and I'll inherit 20 million dollars.' Impressed, the woman obtained his business card and three days later, she became his stepmother!!!

Women are so much better at estate planning than men!!!

**Marcia Begg**

[Ed. Marcia is a very active member of the Victoria Branch of the Australian Rhododendron Society]

## From the Editor

Sometimes, but not too often we hope, life overwhelms the activities of the Society! This explains the late printing of this month's newsletter and might have the same impact on the one for next month. I apologize but there are only so many minutes in the day and night.

*Authors, I need some more articles.*

Ian E. Efford

## Dead? Or is it still alive?

Bruce Clyburn

[Ed. Anyone growing cuttings finds that some go brown and “die”. Bruce Clyburn, from New Waterford, NS suggests that patience is a virtue.]

About 3 weeks ago I finished removing the last of my plants from the cold frames and setting them out in a sunny location so they can benefit the most from our short growing season. There were several cuttings that I had rooted in 2007 and went through the whole summer outside without putting on any top growth. The remainder of the cuttings were vigorous and healthy with strong new tops.

To me it was obvious that these had no sign of life and were brown, dehydrated and a write-off. I moved them aside in the cold frame planning to come back some later day and reclaim the pots and soil-less mix in them. We had some hot dry days last week but some heavy rain late in the week. Deciding I needed those extra pots I went back to the cold frame area and was a bit surprised to see the fresh healthy growth the attached photos show. Guess you shouldn't give up too early.



Similar thing happened about ten years ago I had too many plants of rhododendron Gartendirector Rieger, this is a low *williamsianum* hybrid ex Germany by Dietrich Hobbie. Very borderline hardy here, I removed 3 plants from their 6" pots and tossed them out into the woods. There they would quickly dry out and add to the humus on the forest floor. I couldn't believe almost 3 years after when I was cutting alders from that section of woods to find the 3 Gartendirector Riegers in excellent health albeit a bit leggy around 3 feet across.