The Victoria Rhododendron Society *Newsletter*

Box 5562 Postal Station B, Victoria BC Canada V8R 6S4

May 2010 Thirtieth Year of Publication

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MEETING 7:30
MONDAY, May 3, 2010
GARTH HOMER CENTRE, 811 DARWIN STREET, VICTORIA, B. C.
Speaker: Lloyd Gilmore,
"Hybridizing Rhododendrons for Special Effects"

Lloyd saw his first rhododendron on Pipeline Road in Saanich when he was eight. He became interested hybridizing, at first for orchids in Kamloops, then rhododendrons when he moved back to the Coast fifteen years ago.

REFRESHMENTS

Please let Johanna Massa know at 250-642-5491 if you are coming to the meeting and bringing goodies:

Bill and Betty Gordon, John and Judy Gordon, Dorothy Griffin, Tricia Guiguet, Gary Hadfield, Jocelyn Harder and Radojka and Les Harris.

Please wrap your cookies or snacks.
Coffee and tea are supplied.
Assistance in setting out the food, milk and sugar, napkins and helping in the kitchen cleanup is really appreciated.

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NOTICES FROM THE BOARD

Our Show and Sale is on Saturday, May 8. Please bring in your plant donations (remember dividing plants last fall for this sale?) and donations for the raffle and Silent Auction on FRIDAY, May 7. Location : Cadboro Bay United Church, 2625 Arbutus Road, Victoria. Show time, Saturday, May 8, from 11-3.

IN MEMORIAM

In March, two long-term members of the VRS passed away. Bill Hyslop gardened in the Sooke area, planting a variety of small rhododendrons on a sunny slope. He and his wife Sue volunteered for several Rhodo Shows. John Dickman was a long-time member who had an extensive rhododendron garden in Metchosin. He would come to our meetings with his daughter, Heather, and happily collect even more rhodos for his garden from the raffle.

APRIL'S TALK

By Theresa McMillan

Carmen Varcoe's talk on a "Plant Expedition to Bhutan" was full of interesting information on the country's people, culture, geography and, of course, its many rhododendrons.
Bhutan is an unusual country in that all tourists must have a guide, there are no fast food outlets, there is just one airline—refreshing!
It is a small country in the Himalayas, bordering on Tibet. It has a relatively low population of less than one million. It is 80% wooded, and the rest of the land is intensively farmed, growing wheat, rice and barley.
The people all wear their national costume, a one piece printed goh for men and an equivalent garment for women, a garment resembling a short kimono.
English is the second language, the country is a constitutional monarchy, and the people are all Buddhists.
The most common rhododendron in the higher elevations is R. Kesangiae, a deep pink. It only recently came into circulation in the West.

ONCE A COVETED SHRUB, NOW AN INVASIVE WEED...

by Marilyn Holt & Wikipedia (Reprinted with permission from Marilyn Holt.)

The article is from The Bulletin, B.C. Council of Garden Clubs, January/ February 2010 edition)

Japanese Knotweed

Recognize this shrub?
Think red stems, jointed like bamboo but with wide green leaves. I have heard this referred to as 'wide leaf bamboo' but in actual fact it is Japanese Knotweed. Notice the last four letters of the name, WEED! The Latin name for this plant is Fallopia Japonica, syn. Polygonum cuspidatum. This is a large herbaceous plant native to eastern Asia - namely Japan, China and Korea.
Japanese knotweed has hollow stems with distinct raised nodes that give it the appearance of bamboo, though it is not closely related. While stems may reach a maximum height of 3-4 m each growing season, it is typical to see much smaller plants in places where they sprout through cracks in the pavement or are repeatedly cut down. The leaves are broad oval with a truncated base, 7-14 cm long and 5-12 cm broad, with an entire margin. The flowers are small, creamy white, produced in erect racemes 6 -15 cm long in late summer and early autumn.

Japanese Knotweed is closely related to Giant Knotweed (Fallopia sachalinensis), and is of the same family as rhubarb, sorrel and buckwheat. It was an 'introduced species', being brought to Europe from Asia in the 19th Century as an ornamental exotic plant for animal feed and, not surprisingly because of its ease to colonize, to prevent erosion of soil. When introduced as a garden plant, it was granted awards for being an excellent specimen, but soon lost favour when its thuggish behaviour was realized. Other names for Japanese Knotweed include Mexican bamboo, American bamboo, Japanese bamboo, fleece flower, sally rhubarb, donkey rhubarb, pea shooters, elephant ears, monkey weed, Hancock's curse, Huzhang, crimson beauty and wild rhubarb.

No matter what it is called, this shrub has become invasive in more countries than ours. In the U.S.A. and Europe, Japanese knotweed is widely considered an invasive species or weed. It is listed by the World Conservation Union as one of the world's 100 worst invasive species.

It is a frequent colonizer of temperate riparian (area between land and streams) ecosystems, roadsides and waste places. It forms thick, dense colonies that completely crowd out any other herbaceous species and is now considered one of the worst invasive exotics in parts of the eastern United States.
It can be found in 39 of the 50 United States and in six provinces in Canada. It is listed as an invasive weed in Ohio, Vermont, Virginia, New York, Alaska, Pennsylvania region and Washington state. The species is also common in Europe.

In the UK it was made illegal to spread Japanese knotweed by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. It is also classed as "controlled waste" in Britain under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. This requires disposal at licensed landfill sites. The speed at which Japanese Knotweed has spread throughout Britain has been nothing less than spectacular. It thrives in Britain's mild climate and has caused major damage to commercial and do-

mestic sites. It now occupies a site in every 10 square kilometres of England and Wales and is also present to a lesser extent in Scotland, Ireland and other parts of Europe.

It has successfully invaded the Canadian countryside partially because of its tolerance to a very wide range of soil types, pH and salinity. Its rhizomes can survive temperatures of -35 ° C (-30 degrees F) and can extend 7 metres (23 ft) horizontally and 3 metres (9.8 ft) deep, making removal by excavation extremely difficult. If sprayed with herbicide, the rhizomes can remain dormant for upwards of twenty years until threat of extinction is past, then will resume growing. The plant is also resilient to cutting, vigorously re-sprouting from the roots. The aggressive growth pattern is capable of invading engineered structures such as concrete, tarmac, brick walls and foundations. Soil and waste containing Japanese Knotweed is deemed to have the potential to cause ecological harm and is a threat to native plants and has impacts on landscape, wildlife and natural vegetation. Small sections of knotweed rhizomes can break off and be carried by water downstream to start a new infestation. So far only commercial developments have realized the commercial and environmental significance of this invasive weed, but it is only a matter of time before even the grass in your garden is affected.

ERADICATION

Trying to get rid of Japanese Knotweed has become a global quest and many different eradication methods have been tried. Here are a few:

. Herbicide application close to the flowering stage in late summer or autumn. In some cases it is possible to eradicate Japanese knotweed in one growing season using only herbicides (tilting at windmills here I think).

. Trials in the Queen Charlotte Islands (Haida Gwaii) of British Columbia using sea water sprayed on the foliage have demonstrated promising results, which may prove to be a viable option for eradication where concerns over herbicide application are too great.

. Two biological pest control agents that show promise in the control of the plant are the psyllid Aphalara itadori and a leaf spot fungus from genus Mycosphaerella

. Cutting back the stems and then placing heavy mulch in the form of carpeting and heavy plastic over the entire site will discourage growth. As previously mentioned, the rhizomes can remain dormant for upwards of 20 years before initiating regrowth when the mulch is removed.

The method easily available to us is to use a herbicide. I know, many of you do not like to use herbicides but I believe in this case, and in the method I describe below, you may deem it acceptable.

First the herbicide of choice is one that is high in glyphosate as it is the best herbicide to use for Japanese Knotweed because it is a 'systemic' (penetrates the plants and goes down to the root system). Glyphosate is available under several trade names - all label the product as a "weed and grass killer", i.e. Roundup.

Commercial glyphosate concentrates contain approximately 20%-40% glyphosate; the balance is mostly water. Such concentrates need to be diluted in water. The most effective spraying solution contains about 5%-10% glyphosate in water. (To make a 5% solution from a 40% concentrate mix 1 part concentrate with 7 parts water.) Ready-to-use solutions that contain less than 5% glyphosate are too weak and do not work.

Now, here is where I tell you NOT TO SPRAY the plants. My method takes a little more time, but is less likely to damage any other plant or the environment. I will explain.

I have read numerous articles on how to get rid of this major weed and in one they mentioned using a herbicide 'injector' to feed the killing agent straight to the rhizomes. Unfortunately this injector is approximately $300+.

I guess the injector idea really took hold in my mind. About a week later as I was walking through the Buckerfields store in Abbotsford, I noticed a huge syringe that is sold for use on cattle. Nearby was a huge needle, also used to go through the tough hides of cows. An idea was born! A home-made herbicide injector

I bought a package of syringes (they only came in three to the package, not in singles) and a needle (they came separately). My total expense not quite $5.00.

Now, I don't have Japanese Knotweed on my property but I do have the next worst thing - Blackberries (editor’s note: in Victo-

ria, the huge blackberry plants are usually called Himalayan Blackberries)- which is just as hard to eradicate.

Himalayan Blackberries

Applying the principal of the injector, I mixed up Roundup Super Concentrate to slightly higher than the recommended spray strength - 15%, cut back the blackberry canes to about six inches off the ground, then injected the herbicide right into the canes. This was in mid August. What was left of the canes turned brown, then black. No new growth came back up and it actually looks like this method worked. It has been sixteen weeks and I do not see any green shoots emerging. Of course, I can't be totally sure until spring but if I have to repeat the process again, I will do so.

PRINCIPLE TO ERADICATING WEEDS

The main principle to eradicating stubborn weeds is not to allow them to feed their root system. This means not letting them make any new growth. Be diligent about this!

When spraying with a herbicide, it is always recommended to repeat the spraying process in three weeks, again knocking back any new growth and to repeat this process as long as you see regrowth. This should also be done when injecting the herbicide into the stems of plants.

From everything I have read - the best time to try and control these plants is in the fall when they are trying to build up their food stores for spring.

Since I have tried this method, I have mentioned it to several Buckerfield's customers trying to eradicate blackberries and others have had the same positive results. Hopefully in the spring there will be minimal, and if I am lucky, no regrowth of those nasty blackberry canes in the three spots in my yard.

Remember, as with Japanese Knotweed, Blackberries are just as stubborn so you must remain vigilant to any regrowth and knock it back fast!

SALES and OPEN GARDENS

Plant Sale & Open Garden

Saturday April 17th 10-1- Evelyn Weesjes- Wide selection of ferns, rhododendrons & shrubs-10629 Derrick Road (left off West Saanich Rd. to Downey, left off Downey to Derrick). Come early for best selection.

Plant Sale & Open Garden

Sunday April 25th 10-1 Carmen Varcoe & Friends- Wide selection of perennials-5450 Old West Saanich Rd. (some parking available next door at the Gazebo B & B).

Plantaholics Plant Sale

Sunday May 23rd 9-12 Abkhazi Gardens -1964 Fairfield Rd. Parking at Margaret Jenkins School. Abkhazi Gardens open, free entry 9-12.

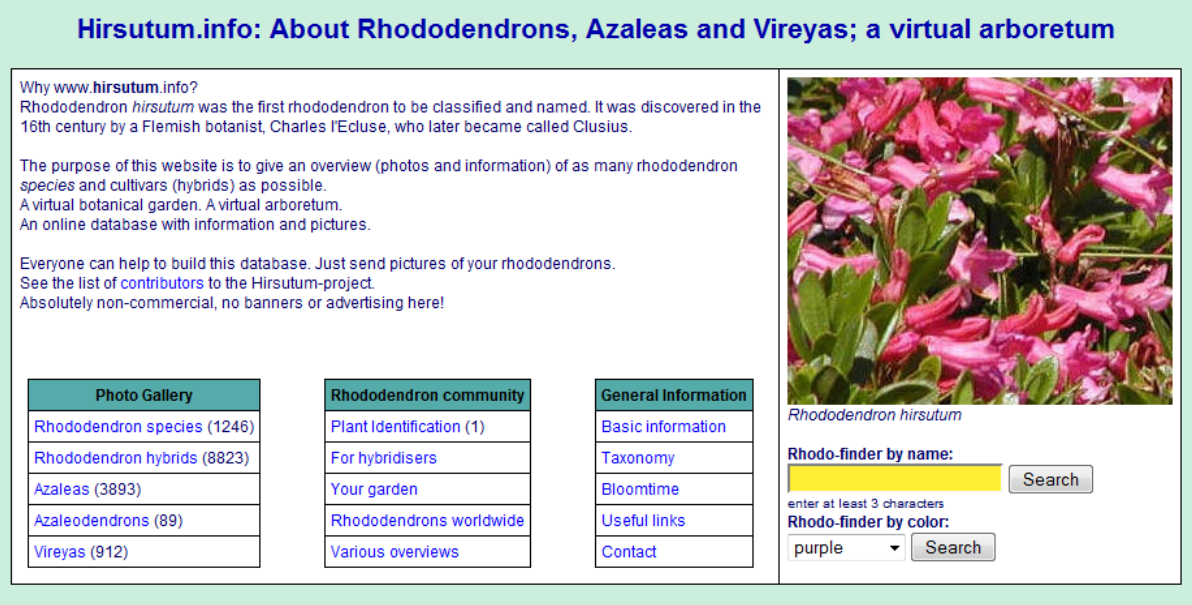
Hirsutum.info --- A great new website with rhododendron pictures

By Garth Wedemire, Fraser Valley Chapter, ARS --- March 29, 2010

On Saturday, February 20th of this year, I received an email from David Godfrey of the North Island Chapter. Some of the contents of the email are reproduced below:

> I have been communicating with Herman Van Ree in Holland, the webmaster of the rhodo database website www.hirsutum.info and sent photos on behalf of Harry (Wright). I am now just completing sending all of Ken's (Ken Gibson's) photos (480 total) They are big files (2 to 3 MB each) so have been limiting them to 3 per email. It is taking 163 emails to get them all to him (Herman van Ree). ....
> .... We have also exchanged information about each other, and I have Herman's permission to share this information with you. (I have actually pieced together information from several emails.) He and Marjo plan to revisit Vancouver Island in spring 2011, as they were here last August (2009) but missed the beauty of the rhodos.
> The links to view his house and property are....website home page: www.huize-zandbergen.nl house: www.huize-zandbergen.nl/tuin/index.html property: www.huize-zandbergen.nl/huis/index.html

Well, thanks to David, I had a look at both the "Hirsutum Project" website and Herman's website which is in Dutch but because it is mostly pictures it was easy to get around and enjoyable. The



"Hirsutum Project" was started on June 3, 2009. As stated on the website --- The goal of the project is to collect as much information and as many photos as possible concerning rhododendrons. This includes *species*, hybrids, azaleas, vireyas and azaleodendrons.

I am amazed how quickly this website has grown. Eight of the twenty-six contributors of photographs are from Canada. There are over 2,850 photos of hybrids and 1,850 photos of species already in this large database. As an example, there are eight photos of 'Hotei' from four contributors.

With this website and database, we get an overview of the spread of rhododendrons worldwide. This website and the data that it contains, may help to 'find' cultivars previously thought to be extinct. Participate in this 10 year project of the Members of the Nederlandse Rhododendron Vereniging (Dutch chapter of the ARS).

Don't miss out on this exciting new website www.hirsutum.info. You can set up your own virtual garden in the "Your garden" section. After adding your plants, you will be able to see pictures of your virtual garden.

CONTAINER GARDEN CLUB

The Container Garden Club will hold its sale at the Hillside Mall in Victoria on the 14 & 15 of May 2010 during mall hours. There will be fuchsias, geraniums, basket stuffers, hanging baskets, containers, & some herbs & hardy perennials.

Further information is available on the club web site at the following address: http://container-garden-vic.tripod.com/

COWICHAN VALLEY RHODODENDRON SOCIETY ANNUAL RHODODENDRON AND PLANT SALE

Free rhododendrons for the first 50 customers
Saturday, May 1, 2010, 10 a.m. to 1:30.
Queen of Angels School Gym
Maple Bay Road, Duncan

- Doors open at 10 a.m. sharp until 1:30.
- Come early for best selection.
- Free rhododendrons for the first 50 customers.
- More than 2,000 rhodos and plants for sale.
- Unique, special and hard to find rhodos for sale.
- Many different growers and sellers of high quality plants from all over Vancouver Island.
- Free planting, growing, maintenance advice from dedicated rhodoholics
- Truss (flower) display of local rhodos in bloom,.from many specialty growers on the Island
- Show of trusses (flowers)
- Refreshments.

Victoria Rhododendron Society
OPEN GARDENS 2010

Please mark your calendars for the following Thursdays in the months of April and May. It has been awhile since we toured other members gardens and it is time to see the updates, as gardens are always a work in progress. We extend an especially warm welcome to our new members.

April 15, Thursday, 6 p.m. - dusk
Ken and Madeleine Webb
5008 Old West Saanich Road
250-744-1785

April 22, Thursday, 6 p.m. - dusk
Norm and Jean Todd
5631 Batu Road
Victoria
250-658-5102

April 29, Thursday, 1 p.m. - dusk
Moe and Johanna Massa
5024 Glinz Lake Road, Sooke by
Camp Thunderbird
250-642-5491

May 13, Thursday, 1 p.m. - dusk
Roy and Lois Blackmore
758 Walfred Road
Langford
250-478-6615

VRS ‘s Logo Flower R. “Transit Gold”

Rhododendron of the Year Awards

A new feature on the ARS District 1 Website: www.rhodos.ca is a page which summarizes the "Rhododendron of the Year Awards" for the Pacific Northwest and Southwestern British Columbia (ARS District 1) for the years 2002 to 2010.

Rhododendron of the Year Awards are made in four categories for each of eight geographical regions of the United States and Canada. These include elepidote rhododendrons, lepidote rhododendrons, deciduous azaleas and evergreen azaleas. Twenty-nine plants have been selected for the year 2010. See the following webpage for more information: http://www.rhododendron.org/royawardsintro6.htm

Plants selected for the 2010 Rhododendron of the Year Awards were drawn from the American Rhododendron Society's "Proven Performers" lists. These lists are developed and updated each year by the local ARS chapters and are made up of plants that do very well in members' own gardens over many years.

The purpose of the ROY awards is to educate the public about the wide range of rhododendrons that can be grown successfully in people's gardens. To be selected for a ROY award a plant must:

- have excellent foliage and flowers
- have an attractive growth habit
- prove itself hardy for the specific region
- be pest and disease resistant

Plants selected for the "Northwest Region" (our region) for 2010 are:

- **'Seaview Sunset**' (elepidote) - a Frank Fujioka cross of 'Nancy Evans' and 'Canadian Sunset'
- '**Too Bee**' (lepidote) – a Warren Berg cross of 'Patricia' and R. keiskei 'Yaku Fairy'
- '**Gibralter**' (deciduous azalea) – a selection by Edmund de Rothschild
- '**Rosebud**' (evergreen azalea) – a Joe Gable cross of 'Louise Gable' and 'Caroline Gable'

See the webpage: http://rhodos.ca/ROTY/roty.html for Rhododendron of the Year Awards for the Pacific Northwest and Southwestern British Columbia (ARS District 1) for the years 2002 to 2010.

'Seaview Sunset"

"Too Bee"

"Gibralter"

"Rosebud"