The Victoria Rhododendron Society *Newsletter*

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

January 2012 Thirty-Second Year of Publication

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MEETING 7:30
MONDAY, January 9, 2012
GARTH HOMER CENTRE, 811 DARWIN STREET, VICTORIA, B. C.

Speaker: Gord Hutchings. "Native Pollinizers"

Gord Hutchings is a field biologist who has worked as an insect surveyor all over B.C. and the Yukon. Gordon has been concentrating on native bees for the past 22 years, He is a lively and gifted raconteur full of stories about his field work and anecdotes about the habits of his research subjects.

REFRESHMENTS
Will the following members please let Betty Gordon know at 250-479-0210 if you are coming to the meeting and bringing goodies.

Keiko and William Alkire, David Ballantine, Peter Barriscale, Roy and Lois Blackmore and Frank Bosworth.

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

In This Issue

CHRISTMAS'S POT- LUCK DINNER

On December 12, we had our annual Christmas Pot-Luck Dinner. What a feast it was, with appetizers, salads, vegetable casseroles, a ham with various mustards, sliced turkey breast with fresh cranberry sauce, and for all of us with a sweet tooth, a great number of temptations, tarts, pies, cookies, bars, and even candy.
Jacq Bradbury and her team, Keilko Alkire, Norma Buckley, Carolyn Marquardt, Jeannie Parsons and Lois Blackmore created the table centerpieces, swaths, and other items for the raffle. They used an artistic blend of branches, dried plants and

VICTORIA RHODODENDRON SOCIETY BOARD

berries.
Special mention goes to Lois Blackmore for knitting several colourful scarves. Many thanks to other members who brought in a fine variety of objects for display and plants for the raffle..
Peter Barriscale and Calvin Parsons handed out the ribbons for the winners of November's Photography Contest.
Many members brought non-perishable food and the proceeds from the raffle, about $300, were very much appreciated by the Mustard Seed Food Bank.

A species rhododendron in bloom, R. yunnanense

A Fujioka hybrid rhododendron in bloom, R. "Starbright Champagne"

Our VRS WEBSITE
by Theresa McMillan

I have just spent a pleasant few hours checking out our VICTORIA RHODODENDRON SOCIETY **WEBSITE**.
The Website was first set up by Arthur Ralfs. More recently, Calvin Parsons has rebuilt it, adding material and improving it. The very well set up Website is one we can be proud of.
The home page has our logo, a beautiful picture of R. "Transit Gold". It is followed by the location of our meeting, a list of dates for upcoming speakers and their topics, tours, and our summer picnic.
Other sections are seen above and below the speaker section.
The ARS link is full of all sorts of information from the American Rhododendron Society, of which we are a Chapter.
There's a section on Membership. This includes costs for Full Membership, Local (or Friend) or Associate Memberships. People can register either online or by mail. As well, there's the email address so that people can contact the VRS if they have questions.
The purpose and the activities of the Propagating Group is described in one section.
There is another section on Newsletters and copies are available online from Sept. 2007 to the latest ones.
In the Archives section are articles, from older VRS Newsletters, including several by Joe Harvey and Norman Todd.
In the Photo section are pictures from some of our show and sales. From 2006 to 2009, Arthur Ralfs put in each year's show entries, with photos and labeled rhododendron blossoms.
There's a section on Awards, trophies, and medals, complete with the names of the winners over the years**.**
Another section, FAQs, or Frequently Asked Questions prepared by Bill McMillan which answers typical questions on rhododendron care.
There are also links to other garden clubs.
Best of all, the Website is easy to use.

AZALEA AND RHODODENDRON CARE AND CULTURE

By R.A. McNeilan
Oregon State University Portland, Oregon

(Reprinted from the Williamette Chapter Newsletter, September 2009 and reprinted with permission from Glen Jamieson, editor of the ARS Journal, for the Winter 2010 edition.)

Rhododendrons and azaleas are closely . related plants with certain cultural requirements that must be met to ensure their successful growth. The following information is provided to help the amateur gardener with the culture of these plants.

Planting and Transplanting

When planting azaleas and rhododendrons, give them ample protection from wind and direct afternoon sun. Around buildings, they do best on the east or north side. In open areas, they like alternating sun and shade. Do not plant them in windy spots. Azaleas and rhododendrons, when properly grown, can be transplanted successfully at any time of year if they . are given special care in watering and protection from drying and freezing. The ideal time to transplant these plants is during their dormant season, either in the fall or early spring while temperatures are cool and soil moisture is plentiful. Plant azaleas or rhododendrons at the same depth they were growing in the nursery. Spacing will depend on the mature spread of the plants.

Many nursery plants are grown in soil mixtures containing large amounts of peat moss and may not match the soil in your yard. Work peat moss or other humusy organic matter into the soil around the root ball to ensure good root activity and growth into the soil in your yard.

Soils

Soils should be well drained and should contain an abundance of organic matter. If heavy clay soils predominate in your yard, plant azaleas or rhododendrons on raised beds or establish a drainage system to remove excess water.

These plants will not tolerate alkaline (lime) conditions. Keep this in mind when planting around a new home where lime, masonry material, or cement often become mixed with the surrounding soil. This eventually could cause discoloration and death of the plants. Work the soil into a good seedbed condition before planting. The addition of leaf mold, peat moss, or other organic matter will help almost all soils.. When planting, dig a hole twice the size of the root ball. Mix the excavated soil with soil amendments and place enough improved soil in the bottom of the hole so the top of the root ball is slightly higher than the surrounding soil. Fill the hole to the top, watering as you fill to settle the soil and eliminate air pockets. Allow the plant to establish itself in the new location before adding any fertilizer.

Fertilizers

Avoid the excessive use of lime or alkaline fertilizers around azalea and rhododendron plants. If necessary, apply nitrogen fertilizers or mixtures (either organic or inorganic) containing nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium soon after flowering in the spring. Relative merits of an organic fertilizer as compared to a chemical fertilizer depend on whether the slow availability and less frequent application of the organic type can justify the extra cost.

The amount of fertilizer to use varies from 1-2.5 kg per 10 square metres (2-5 pounds per 100 square feet), depending on natural soil fertility, soil drainage, organic matter, and type of fertilizer.

Minor elements such as magnesium and iron may be needed infrequently to add green color to the foliage.

Water Requirements

Rhododendrons and azaleas have shallow, fibrous root systems, so provide ample water during the summer. If they are planted under wide eave overhangs, furnish water during the entire year. Keep in mind that although these plants need moisture, they will not thrive in wet, poorly aerated soils.

Cultivation

Keep cultivation to a minimum because of the shallow root system of these plants. Use mulches to control weeds, conserve moisture, and provide more uniform soil temperatures. Mulches can be made of sawdust, bark dust, peat moss, straw, or other organic materials. If these materials are incorporated into the soil after serving as a mulch, add some nitrogen to assist in decomposition of the woody materials.

Winter Damage

Winter damage may occur at infrequent intervals, usually due to lack of dormancy in the plant when cold weather occurs. To help development of winter hardiness, avoid adding large amounts of nitrogen after July 15. Some factors affecting the ability of a plant to withstand cold temperatures are length of exposure to low temperatures, rate of temperature fall, extent of plant dormancy, wind and sun exposure, overall condition of the plant, and plant variety**.**

Pruning

If new plants are selected properly, taking into consideration mature plant size and space to be filled, little pruning should be necessary. Remove dead and injured branches. If pruning is necessary, prune the plants soon after flowering to allow flower bud formation for the following year. "Dead-heading" is a pruning operation that involves removing spent flower clusters. It should be done annually.

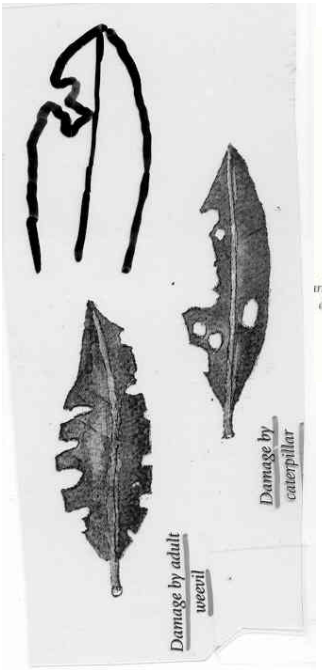
Propagation

Deciduous azaleas are propagated commercially by seed. Evergreen azaleas and rhododendrons root quickly (6 to 8 weeks) from softwood or semi-hardwood " tip cuttings. Cuttings may be made at any time, but June to July cuttings seem most ideal for rooting azaleas, and August to September cuttings seem best for rhododendrons. Make cuttings 8-10 cm (3-4 inches) long, remove lower leaves, and place, the cut end in rooting medium. Equal parts of peat moss and clean sharp. builder's sand make an ideal rooting medium. After roots are formed, place the plants in pots or in a protected area and keep well watered.

Problems

Azaleas and rhododendrons are injured by various types of insects and diseases. Look for the characteristic symptoms of the problem and treat plants promptly with appropriate cultural, biological, mechanical, or chemical methods. Various nutrient disorders will be reflected in foliar symptoms unique for the mineral element deficiency or interaction (Table 1). In any case, it's best to check with local gardening experts for controls and problem prevention. Insects. Oblique-banded leaf rollers feed on and web new growth in the spring and early summer.

Root weevils cause considerable trouble to many ornamentals. The adults cause minor damage to the tops by notching the leaves, producing a scalloped effect along the leaf margins. This damage is negligible compared to that done by the larval form to the root system. Young roots are destroyed, and often the stem is girdled, leading to death of the plant.



Weevil girdled trunks

Spider mites often web leaves and cause them to become yellow and dry. Heavy infestations may cause defoliation. Aphids are troublesome on all ornamentals, particularly rhododendrons, where new growth may be distorted by their feeding.

Diseases

Disease problems include leaf spot, rust, leaf gall, and root rot. In all cases, proper identification is necessary before effective control measures can be recommended.

Table 1. Element deficiency symptoms

Nitrogen	Foliage light green, dwarfed growth
Phosphorus	Leaves smaller and darker green than normal, plants stunted, tips of leaves dead (necrotic)
Potassium	Orange mottling along leaf margins, later becoming (necrotic)
Magnesium	Interveinal yellowing in centers of leaves, mostly on older foliage
Iron	Young leaves pale, older leaves show distinct interveinal chlorosis, entire plant becomes chlorotic
Calcium	New shoot growth stunted, tips of leaves scorched and shriveled with basal portion remaining dark green
Boron	Stunted and contorted multiple shoots, marginal yellowing and tip scorching

*This symptom often is associated with soils where calcium from building operations, old foundations, sidewalks, or brick walls has leached into the soil over a long period of time and has made iron un-available to the plant. In cases such as this, apply sulfur or other acidifying elements to counteract the calcium.

Chlorosis indicating iron aqnd magnesium deficiencies

Upcoming Events

2012	Event	Place	Fee
Sunday, January 1	*Happy New Year*		
April 28	Westshore Centre in Langford	VRS Show and Sale	Free
May 26	Tillicum Centre	VRS Show and Sale	Free
Friday – Monday, May 4 - May 7, 2012	Full 2012 ARS-ASA International Convention, "Appalachian Spring" . Online registration is available.	Asheville, North Carolina	~$515 US
May 23 – June 2	Nine Night Hosted Deluxe English Garden Tour – contact www.cruiseplus.ca or call Liz: Cruiseplus Management Ltd, Lantzville, BC 250-390-0220 or 1-800 854-9664 e-mail: info@cruiseplus.ca	London and Cornwall, UK	$3299.00 CAD per person
June 22-24	"BC Blooms" at Government House	Government House, Victoria (details to come).	
November 5	*People's Choice Rhododendron Photography Evening*	Garth Homer Center	

R. Lee's Scarlet in December

VRS 2012 CALENDAR

Key to the Symbols

General Meetings
Garth Homer Center
811 Darwin Street
Saanich

Propagation Group Meetings
(contact Ken Webb to be added to the email list)

VRS Shows and Sale
Shows April 28, May 26
Sale May 12

Summer Picnic
See May Newsletter for details on location and time

Second Monday is a Statutary Holiday

ARS Convention

January

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

February

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			1	4	3	3
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19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29			

March

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25	26	27	28	29	30	31

April

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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

May

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27	28	29	30	31		

June

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17	18	19	20	21	22	23
	25	26	27	28	29	30

September

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30						

October

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28	29	30	31			

November

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				1	2	3
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18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

December

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30	31					

Rhododendron “Transit Gold”, part of the logo for the VRS.