

# The Victoria Rhododendron Society

## Newsletter



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

January 2013     Thirty-Third Year of Publication

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web page – <http://victoriarhodo.ca>

**MEETING 7:30**

**MONDAY, January 14, 2013**

**GARTH HOMER CENTRE, 811 DARWIN STREET, VICTORIA, B. C.**

**Speaker: Jeff DeJong “The Floriade and Belgium”**

Jeff DeJong is a professional horticulturist who can be heard every Sunday morning on C-FAX 1070 AM. Jeff writes articles for several gardening magazines, and is currently the Site Manager at the renowned Abkhazi Garden. He also leads tours to Europe. The Floriade is a famous Exposition for garden-lovers in Belgium.

### REFRESHMENTS

Please let Betty Gordon know at 250-479-0210 if you are coming to the meeting and bringing goodies.

Karen Burns and Dave Mackas, Carolyn and Tony Marquardt, Moe and Joanna Massa, Bruce and Anne Maycock, Bill and Theresa McMillan

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.

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**NOTE! the Government of British Columbia has decreed a new holiday, Family Day, which is on the *second* Monday of February. So, our February monthly meeting will Monday, Feb. 04, not February 11th.**

**A revised 2013 VRS calendar is on page 8, the last page.**

## **VICTORIA RHODODENDRON SOCIETY BOARD**

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### **Website:**

Calvin Parsons 250-590-0489

## **WINTER TREASURES!**



Late December 2012,  
R. "Transit Gold" in bloom



R. "Lee's Scarlet"



R. "Noblianum"





**An Invitation  
to visit New Zealand,  
the land of the Long White Cloud,  
in 2014 to see and hear about  
Rhododendrons**

*R. 'Kiwi Magic'*

**The New Zealand Rhododendron Association** is celebrating its 75th anniversary in 2014 and is holding an International Conference at Dunedin, from 20—25 October 2014, in conjunction with our annual New Zealand Conference.

See temperate and sub-tropical species and hybrids, as you visit internationally famous gardens during the Conference and on the pre and post conference tours of 4 to 6 days.

Hear renowned international and local speakers over 5 days, as well as visiting gardens of outstanding merit.

**[www.dunedinnz.com](http://www.dunedinnz.com)**

**To register your interest please email your contact details to  
[rhododunedin2014@gmail.com](mailto:rhododunedin2014@gmail.com)**

## **PINK MOUNTAIN BIODIVERSITY RESEARCH INITIATIVE**

Pink Mountain is located 120 km north of Fort St. John in northern British Columbia. The mountain is unique in the province for its rich flora and fauna. Preliminary studies on the flora of the summit plateau reveals that Pink Mountain hosts more red- and blue-listed species (endangered or threatened) than any other location in the province north of Vancouver (Conservation Data Centre information). Examinations of adjacent peaks show only a few flowering plant species, suggesting Pink Mountain is exceptional for its diversity.

Wind turbines have already been tested on the summit of Pink Mountain, and the impact of maintaining that single test site has been severe and has been observed to directly affect one of the threatened plant species. The only known site of a blue-listed buttercup species on the summit was extensively damaged by heavy equipment, easily halving the number of plants. The installation of dozens of wind turbines will destroy the ecological uniqueness of Pink Mountain.

A letter writing campaign over the past two years has made the provincial government aware of the special assemblage of plant and animal species that exist on Pink Mountain and has pressed for the creation of a preserve on a portion of the summit. Results have been disappointing and no indication of interest has been received from the government. More needs to be done.

Presentations to nature societies and gardening clubs around the province have generated significant interest from club members wanting to preserve the ecological integrity of Pink Mountain. While I invite continued help with lobbying the government on behalf of Pink Mountain's biodiversity, it is also neces-

sary to bolster the argument for preservation with additional scientific evidence. With this evidence in hand, the government will be hard-pressed to ignore the need to preserve Pink Mountain.

A proposed Pink Mountain Biodiversity Research Initiative (PMBRI), intended to further document and study the flora and fauna of Pink Mountain, has been endorsed by the UBC Botanical Garden and the Native Plant Society of BC. PMBRI will involve a three-month field study to cover the entire bloom and seed-set period of the flora of Pink Mountain, with a preceding planning period. Several months of lab and herbarium analysis will follow the field study. Seeds will be collected for propagation and for eventual distribution to gardeners through a seed exchange program.

We are asking your organization to commit up to \$3000 (suggested \$500 - \$1000) to help fund PMBRI

Thank you for your support. Please contact me with any inquiries.

Ron Long  
[rlphoto@shaw.ca](mailto:rlphoto@shaw.ca) .



Pink Mountain in northern B.C. gets its name from the thousands of fireweed blooms in spring.



## **Victoria Rhododendron Society CHRISTMAS POT-LUCK DINNER**

Theresa McMillan

On the evening of Monday, December 10, over 50 members of our club enjoyed the traditional Christmas dinner with a wonderful variety of tasty foods. The tables were decorated with sprays of different colours and textures of conifer foliage and other plants with winter interest.



People scrutinized the raffle tables, trying to decide which of many tempting items to bid on.

The proceeds of over \$300 along and also boxes of donated food were donated to the Mustard Seed Food Bank.

Our thanks goes to all the volunteers who helped make this dinner a highlight of the year!

## **Photography Night November**



Calvin Parsons , President, and Bill McMillan, winner of the Best in Show and the High Aggregate rosettes for November's Photography Contest.



Norma Senn and Mary Kay Thurston discussing items on the raffle table.

### Upcoming Events

2013	Event	Place	Fee
Wed – Sun May 1 - 5	<u>ARS 2013 Convention</u> Hosted by the Olympia Chapter of the ARS	Seatac Airport Marriott Seatac, Washington	Variable
Thur - Sat May 9 - 11	2013 CVRS Tour to Washington State	Gardens in Washington State area and one in BC	\$500/p. dbl or \$600/p single occupancy

### Oddthoughts 14. Tiger, Tiger

M.J. Harvey

Why bother to grow a plant whose flowers only last a day? Because it is quite the most spectacular flower you can grow with little effort. No, not the day lily. This is the tiger flower, also called the peacock flower. The ‘only one day’ slur is a bit misleading because the stems produce a succession of flowers over many weeks.



**Name:** *Tigridia pavonia*, from ‘tiger’ because of the spots in the centre, and in honour of Pavon, an early plant explorer sent by the Spanish monarchy to discover what was in their Mexican territory.

**Family:** Iridaceae, flower parts in threes, fruit a three cornered capsule.

**Flower:** About five inches across, flat, facing up, vivid shades of red, orange, yellow, more rarely white or mauve. The stigmas and anthers project above the central dish (typical for a hummingbird flower).

**Cultivation:** Easy, plant the corms in a sunny spot and forget them. I plant mine thickly in large pots for front step decoration. When flowering is over the pots are put in the back yard for the corms to develop for next year.

**How to obtain:** I got mine as shrivelled little corms in a plastic bag from the half-price rack in Garden Works at the end of spring. They grew fantastically well. This is typical of desert plants.

**From seed:** Sow in pots in early spring; they come up like grass and may flower in their second year. Emphasis on *may*, sow thinly and keep growing continuously all summer with fertiliser boost. Dry the pots off in winter.

**How to obtain seed?** Will be available free at meetings.



## 2013 CVRS Tour to Washington State May 9 to 11

The Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society is again hosting a great tour this spring heading south on a three day-two night visit to seven spectacular gardens in BC and northern Washington State on Whidbey and Bainbridge Islands and sites in and around Seattle.

We leave Duncan Thursday morning at 8 am and head to the Saanich Peninsula where Evelyn Weesjes hosts us at her amazing 9 acre jewel - Towner Crest garden overlooking Towner Bay. Her garden well reflects her contributions to rhododendron culture.

We then board the Washington State Ferry at Sidney and take a leisurely cruise through the southern Gulf Islands to Anacortes. We proceed to Whidbey Island where our first stop is the Coupeville garden of Dave and Linda Dickerson. With more than 200 tons of special exotic and local rock hardscaping on their 1 acre plot, the garden now has more than 900 rhodos and beautiful annuals. Overnight is in the Coachman Inn in Oak Harbour with a short presentation from local garden experts after dinner.

Next morning we visit the famous rhodo breeder Frank Fujioka and his fantastic oceanside garden with many rare and unique rhodos, then the Meerkerk Rhododendron gardens-a paradise created by Ann and Max Meerkerk. There are fifty three acres of inspirational woodland gardens and a forest preserve offering over 5 miles of trails enabling us to breathe in the serene beauty and nature.

After lunch we take a ferries from Clinton to Mukilteo then Kingston to Edmonds and a drive over the causeway to Bainbridge Island and the famous Bloedel Gardens. These 150 acres are a unique blend of natural woodlands and beautifully landscaped gardens, including a Japanese Garden by renowned landscaper Fujitaro Kubota, a Moss Garden, a Reflection Pool and the Bloedels' former estate home. Our final ferry of the day is to Seattle where we spend the night in the heart of downtown. The evening is free for shopping, dining and sightseeing.

Saturday morning we visit the Kubota Gardens, a legacy to its founder Fujitaro Kubota who in 1927 bought two hectares of logged off swampland in Seattle and started his Rainier Beach garden. Another 7 ha were added in 1981 and the City of Seattle acquired the Kubota garden in 1987. This unique urban refuge displays over 80 years of effort including 400 tons of stone placed to create waterfalls, reflection pools and habitat for the thousands of plants this landscaper worked with throughout his long life.

Our final garden visit is to the renowned Rhododendron Species Foundation in Federal Way, south Seattle. They have 10 hectares of splendid botanical gardens and one of the largest collections of species rhododendrons and azaleas in the world.

After a shopping and supper stop at the Bellis Fair mall in Bellingham, we travel north to the Tsawwassen ferry terminal to catch the last ferry, arriving in Duncan around 11:30 pm.

The all-inclusive cost of the tour is \$500 per person (double occupancy) or \$ 635 (single occupancy). A **\$200 deposit** is required to confirm your seat. The price includes:

- 3 days of travel in a deluxe highway coach
- All ferry fares, gratuities and taxes
- All meals except suppers on Friday and Saturday nights
- Morning snacks/soft drinks and bottled water
- 2 nights' accommodation--Oak Harbour and downtown Seattle

You will need a valid passport for this trip. **Nobody gets on the bus in Duncan without a passport.** We also recommend you purchase travel medical insurance for your visit to the USA. Participants should be in good physical condition but the sites are mostly well accessible.

Final payment is due April 15, 2013.





## VRS 2013 Calendar

### Key to the Symbols

**General Meetings**  
Garth Homer Center  
811 Darwin Street  
Saanich

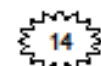
**Propagation Group Meetings**

(contact Ken Webb to be added to the email list)

**VRS Shows and Sale**  
Show April 27 Tillicum Mall  
Sale May 11 Abkhazi Garden  
Show May 25 Westshore Mall

**Summer Picnic**  
See May Newsletter for details on location and time

**ARS Convention May 1-5**  
Seattle Airport Marriott, SeaTac, Washington



Conflicting Statutory Holiday

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Western Regional Conference, Newport, Oregon																				
December																				
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