

# The Victoria Rhododendron Society

## Newsletter



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

MEETING 7:30

**MONDAY, November 10, 2014**

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

**Program: Photography Night**

Every November, our garden club features photographs by our members of rhododendrons and companion plants. The pictures brighten up the fall and winter seasons.

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### October's Meeting Theresa McMillan

At first Calvin Parsons talked to us about details of the May 2015 ARS Convention.

Then the attendees were divided into two groups. Calvin took the first group out of the room to tour the Mary Winspear Centre to show how it will be used in our Convention next May. The second group looked at Joe Harvey's demonstration of propagating ferns by spores.

Calvin described the Mary Winspear Centre as follows:

The Entrance Hallway will provide space for

### REFRESHMENTS provided by:

Kathy McKay

Bill & Theresa McMillan

Jack McNeill

Nadine Minckler

Bonnie Moro

Karen & Burns Morrison

Please email Betty Gordon at [bbgordon@shaw.ca](mailto:bbgordon@shaw.ca) (250.479.0210) if you are coming with your wrapped goodies/snacks. Coffee and tea are supplied. Assistance in setting out the food, milk and sugar, napkins and helping Betty in the kitchen cleanup is really appreciated.

## VICTORIA RHODODENDRON SOCIETY BOARD

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Calvin Parsons 250-590-0489

*(Continued from page 1)*

Registration, coffee/tea stands, display cases for raffle and auction items, and artwork. Big screen monitors on the walls will broadcast our messages and the entries into the Photography Contest.

Our Hospitality Room will be open all day throughout the convention. This will be a lively place for friends to talk, network with others, and put their feet up.

Next to the Hospitality Room will be the Plant Sale Room where folks will pay for their purchases as well as a Holding Area for purchased plants. Outside this room, in the driveway, will be four large 20' x 20' tents that will house the plants for sale. Metal fencing for security will surround all the plants.

The main Bodine Family Hall will be the location of all the keynote speakers and the dinners.

Extra rooms will be used as needs arise. There will be a Volunteers Room for our fantastic volunteers to relax and refocus their energies!

Of course, there is the large free parking lot and grand entrance that will welcome all travelers.

### Reported by Bill McMillan:

Joe Harvey brought fronds and spores of several choice ferns to the meeting and demonstrated the method of propagating them from spores. I remember a dwarf maidenhair fern (*adiantum venustum*), liquorice fern (*polypodium*) and Chain fern (*woodwardii*). Joe brought plastic containers and his propagating mix and those of us who took part took home containers to try our luck at "growing the ferns on." I selected the dwarf maidenhair fern because of an interest in alpine or alpine-like plants.

Thank you Joe!

# Photography Evening

November 10, 2014

## Categories

### 1. Prints

All entries to be 5" x 7" mounted on a black mat, no frame. Two categories, black & white and colour prints. Mounted pictures are to be entered November 10, the night of the show.

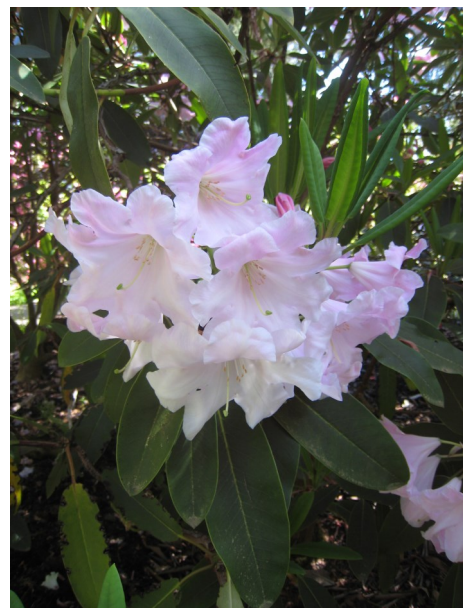
### 2. Digital Entries

Email your digital photos to Calvin at VicRS@shaw.ca. Calvin will prepare a PowerPoint presentation with all entries.

**On the subject line, please enter the category the photo is intended for and the name of the rhododendron or plant or scene:**

1. Single Rhododendron Truss
2. Whole Rhododendron Plant
3. Foliage Rhododendron
4. Companion Plant
5. Garden Scene
6. Creative/Artistic photos – photos altered by technology

**Please enter only two photos per category. Deadline for digital photos is November 1, 2014**



Mail to: The Victoria Rhododendron Society, P.O. Box 5562 Station B,  
Victoria, B.C., V8R 6S4

☐ I wish to receive my Newsletter by E-mail

☐ I agree to be on the circulated club membership list

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City and Province: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Circle one of the following: Regular Member \$35\*    Local: \$25    Associate \$10

If Associate, which chapter do you belong to? \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Paid by Cash \_\_\_\_\_ or Cheque \_\_\_\_\_

\* subsidized by VRS

## Welcome New Members

### **New members since July 1, 2014**

Sherrie Boyte  
Nancy Searing  
Ann & Surinder Kumar  
Carmen Varcoe  
Gailann Squires  
Cathie Arnold  
Katherine & Robert Thompson  
Susan Stitt  
Janet Renouf



# 70<sup>th</sup> ARS CONVENTION May 6-10, 2015.

District #1, Victoria Rhododendron Society  
Sidney-by-the-Sea: Vancouver Island's Hidden Little Treasure

Come join the spectacular seventieth celebration of the American Rhododendron Society, members worldwide, international speakers!

## 2015 Updates & Info:

1. Check out our website for more details at [www.2015rhodo.ca](http://www.2015rhodo.ca)
2. Members Billeting: Please consider having one or two of the 2015 attendees stay at your home. We are trying to encourage participants to stay with local members so that they experience our hospitality instead of sitting in a hotel room by themselves. We will have a sign-up sheet available for September for those that can accommodate some guests during our convention.
3. Photos: please keep collecting photos of rhodos and your garden. We would like to have many photos to use on our website to promote the garden tours and the variety of rhodos available in our area.
4. Volunteers: Volunteers will be needed to make this convention a success. Consider signing up in October for many opportunities like: bus captain, greeter, hospitality desk, flower arrangements, info desk, rhodo selling, keynote speaker guide, and many, many more!

## MORE HELP IS NEEDED!!

Several people signed up as volunteers during our October meeting, but we need many more!

Sign-Up sheets will be available at all our meetings until the Spring.



## On Amaryllises

M. J. Harvey

(Note. Joe is a retired plant geneticist who has worked at Kew, the Natural History Museum, the Smithsonian and other institutions. His hobby is making unusual plant hybrids.)

Amaryllis got its name because an unknown, penniless Swedish student went to Holland to get a cheap, quick (7 days) medical degree. His becoming a physician was a stipulation of his girlfriend's father. Then he could marry his sweetheart Sara Lisa.

This particular Swede, Carl Linnaeus, got waylaid on his way back to Sweden by the equivalent of a multibillionaire, George Clifford, banker and director of the Dutch East India Company. Clifford had accumulated a vast collection of exotic plants and animals. The plants were mainly new to science and Clifford wanted them named. He had heard that young Carl was a genius with names.

Clifford made the young man an offer he could not refuse: salary, room and board, use of his library and travel expenses. All Carl had to do was produce a catalogue of names and descriptions of the plants.

Three years later, in 1738, a sumptuous book, *Hortus Cliffortianus* – Clifford's Garden was published and made Linnaeus famous. (I have a reprint but an original is about \$10k).

Among the plants for which Linnaeus had to invent names was a pink-flowered lily found growing on hillsides in the Cape. At the time he was using names that occurred in classical stories. His chain of thought obviously went: beautiful pink flower on a hillside – think shepherdess – an Ovid

tale had a shepherdess named Amaryllis – call the plant Amaryllis.

Much later, explorers in Mexico found identical, well almost identical bulbs, also growing on hillsides. These New World Amaryllis were introduced to Europe where they made far better conservatory and window ledge plants than the South African ones.

After the Mexican plants had become popular, someone said in effect: "Look, these bulbs are quite different in several small details from the African one. They deserve their own name". From the accident of one particular shriveled, dried flower head looking vaguely like the outline of the head of a horse, the Mexican plants were named *Hippeastrum*, from Greek *hippo*, horse.

So the Amaryllis of window ledges changed to *Hippeastrum* officially, but has kept the common



name amaryllis, usually written with a lower case 'a'. Additional to the above, also in Mexico, J. H. von Sprekelsen discovered a vivid scarlet-flowered bulb with different tepals from *Hippeastrum*. This was named for him, *Sprekelia*.

Now *Hippeastrum* (amaryllis) forms a hybrid with *Sprekelia* but bulbs are rarely available. So why not make my own?

My *Sprekelia* flowered first, so I stored dried pollen in the fridge. My *Hippeastrum* happened to be *H. papilio*, with a whitish flower, green throat



and red edging. A dab of *Sprekelia* pollen on the stigma of the *papilio* resulted in a fat capsule but only about a dozen seeds. In November the seeds germinated and needed supplemental lighting to keep the seedlings growing through the winter. Now, June, I have six bulbs with strap-shaped leaves up to 8" long.

I hope to let you know what the flowers look like in ... 3 or 4 years ... ?

Oh, and yes, Carl did marry Sara Lisa.

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## Propagation Group Activities

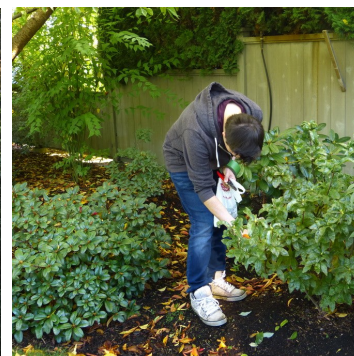
by Bill McMillan

Nine members of the Propagation Group travelled to Nanoose and Nanaimo on Saturday, October 18th on a cuttings foray. We visited and took selected cuttings from four gardens and much appreciated the hospitality of Art and Susan

Lightburn, Al and Marie Biberstein, Gail and Alan MacRae and Dick and Ann Beamish.

The gardens have a wide variety of plants, and generally conditions that are milder than our location in Colwood. I enjoyed seeing the many rhododendrons that I do not have and checking the comparative health of those that I do have. The sea-level Lightburn garden, the hillside Biberstein garden, the magnificent view from the MacRae garden were all great. The tropical-looking almost jungle at the Beamish's particularly intrigued me with its bananas, loquat tree and lush plantings of rhododendrons, not to mention the whimsy of the 'lizard rocks' lining the path and the happy Buddhas.

We managed to escape the heavy showers that we could see around us and it was a fine day overall. I was very conservative, but others had hundreds of cuttings. Now I have to get the cuttings into my propagator!



Pictures from Anne Allen

## Upcoming Events

2014	Event	Place	Fee
Nov 10  7:30	General meeting    Photography Night	Garth Homer Center	
Nov 17  7:30	Propagation Group Meeting	TBA, call Ken Webb,  250-744-1785	
Dec 8  6:30	Christmas Party  Potluck Dinner	Garth Homer Center 	
<div style="text-align: center;">    <p style="color: red; font-size: 1.5em;">Happy New Year</p> </div>			
<b>2015</b>			
Jan 12  7:30	General Meeting	Garth Homer Center	