

The Victoria Rhododendron Society



Newsletter September 2014

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

September 2014

e-mail: tkmcmillan@telus.net

Thirty-Fourth Year of Publication

web page – <http://victoriarhodo.ca>

Next meeting at 7:30

Monday, September 8, 2014

**Garth Homer Centre, 813 Darwin Avenue,
Victoria, B.C.**

**Dennis Bottemiller, "How to select and grow Vireyas
as house plants."**

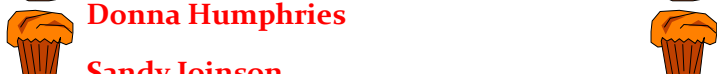
Dennis Bottemiller has been the Propagator and Nursery Manager for the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden for the past ten years where he has been rooting cuttings and growing seedlings of plants from around the world.



REFRESHMENTS to be provided by:



Donna Humphries



Sandy Joinson



Sharon Joseph



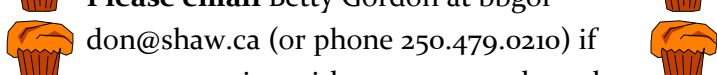
Siggi and Maria Kemmler



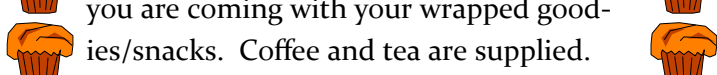
Elaine Kitchen



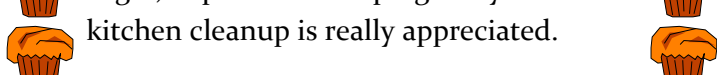
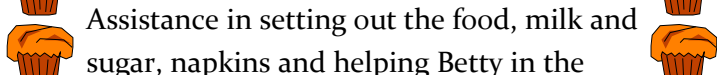
Thurston and Mary Lacalli



Please email Betty Gordon at bbgordon@shaw.ca (or phone 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.



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The June Potluck Picnic, June 29.

By Theresa McMillan

The Picnic was held at the home and garden of our members Ken and Madeleine Webb. The weather varied from cool with a hint of rain to sunny and hot and back again.

But the salmon barbeque, the great food and hospitality made us all feel warm.

As usual, we all left with a fine collection of new plants from the Raffle to look after this summer.

Thanks to all the volunteers that made this event possible.

VICTORIA RHODODENDRON SOCIETY BOARD

President:

Norma Senn 250-595-7276
normasgarden@telus.net

1st Vice President

Ev Van Eerden 250-479-4165
ev.newgen@shaw.ca

Past President:

Calvin Parsons 250-590-0489
waterlily@shaw.ca

Treasurer:

Ann Widdowson 250-479-9167
awiddowson@shaw.ca

Secretary:

Sharon Joseph 250-383-1756
undergroundca@yahoo.com

Members-at-Large:

Lois Blackmore 250-478-6615
loisb@shaw.ca

Ian Duncan 250-479-0820
duncani@telus.net

Carrie George 250-642-3176
carrie.g@shaw.ca

Kathy McKay 250-656-7473
kbta@shaw.ca

Theresa McMillan 250-478-3515
tkmcmillan@telus.net

Bill McMillan 250-478-3515
wtmcmillan@telus.net

Carolyn Marquardt 250-477-8387
tonymarquardt@shaw.ca

Madeleine Webb 250-744-1785
kenwebb@shaw.ca

Ken Webb 250-744-1785
kenwebb@shaw.ca

Newsletter Committee:

Theresa McMillan 250-478-3515

Bill McMillan 250-478-3515

Linda Gilmore 250-642-2256

Joyce Whittle 250-656-7313

Madeleine Webb 250-744-1785

Calvin Parsons 250-590-0489

Website:

Calvin Parsons 250-590-0489



Johanna Massa and her moose sausages



Betty Gordon prepared coffee and tea



Joe Harvey pouring himself some of Heather Dickman's traditional fruit punch.



Norm Todd, John Hawkins and Alan Campbell enjoying a chat in the summer sun.



Marjory and Stephen Brice with Mary's Memorial Cup for best rhododendron companion plant, a magnolia, with presenters Ken and Madeleine Webb



Moe and Johanna Massa and the Alec McCarter Bowl for Best North West hybrid, "Invitation", with presenters Ken and Madeleine Webb



Norman Todd receiving an honorary life membership to the Victoria Rhododendron Society, given by Calvin Parsons. Congratulations Norm!



After the picnic lunch, there was the usual plant raffle, with a large selection of fine plants. Many thanks to those who donated plants!

WINNERS FOR THE VICTORIA RHODODENDRON SOCIETY, 2014 SHOW and SALE

The George Fraser Memorial Trophy for Best Vancouver Island hybrid	Kathy McKay for Yak X "Jim Calder"
Herman and Hella Vaartnou Plate for Best Fragrant Rhododendron Truss or Spray (not an Azalea)	Heather Dickman for a scented white.
Jean and Norman Todd Trophy for Best lepidote species in a container	not given this year.
Mary's Memorial Cup for Best rhododendron companion plant	Steve and Marjorie Brice for a magnolia.
The Jim Calder Memorial Trophy for best species truss or spray:	Beth Dickman for macrophyllum
The Mary Henderson Memorial Trophy for best hybrid rhododendron	John Hawkins for "Midnight Mystique"
The de Rothschild Challenge Trophy for Best in show:	John Hawkins "Midnight Mystique"
The Alex McCarter Bowl for Best NW Hybrid:	Moe and Johanna Massa for "Invitation"
The Gibson Memorial Trophy for high aggregate:	Heather Dickman
The Webb Trophy for People's Choice	Dean Goard for "1000 Butterflies".
Angus and Mary Boyd Trophy for best entry by a novice	Kathy McKay for Yak X "Jim Calder"
The Abkhazi Plate for service to the club	Dean Goard

Ferns with hairy feet

By Joe Harvey

In the humid tropics many ferns have rhizomes that creep over rocks and tree trunks. Here in British Columbia we only have two common species that do this. Both are in the genus *Polypodium*, a word that translates ‘many feet’, referring to the spreading hairy rhizomes.

Ecologically these two ferns differ in how they tackle the problem of summer drought.

Leatherleaf

Leatherleaf – *Polypodium scolieri* – has leathery, ever-green leaves which withstand low humidity. Nevertheless it only grows along the coast where the moist air and fog supply humidity.

Leatherleaf is an excellent garden plant but don’t plant it in a flower bed. It needs a shady rock crack or, better, a shallow pot by a shady door where it can poke its toes over the edge.

It is named after Dr John Scouler. He was employed by the Horticultural Society in 1824 to explore the Pacific Northwest west of the “Stoney Mountains” and sailed to Canada with “Mr. Douglass” on a Hudson’s Bay Company ship.



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Licorice Fern

Licorice fern (also called liquorice fern) takes an alternative ecological approach. The leaves are thin and on the first hot day in May they suddenly shrivel and die. For this reason it is not sold by nurseries. However it establishes itself on shaded rocks. Then, come the first rains in late summer, vivid emerald green leaves sprout, brightening up shady roadside rock cuts along our highways. It is one of my favourites.

I am always surprised to come across children and gardeners who have never chewed a bit of licorice root rhizome. You just need a tiny bit to get the delightful sweet taste from the triterpene glycoside which is released. Try it!



Licorice fern’s name is *Polypodium glycyrrhiza*, named from the liquorice plant *Glycyrrhiza*, an easily grown legume. Greek *glycyrrhiza* translates ‘sweet root’. Licorice fern was investigated as a source of sweetening in the race to satisfy the public demand for a ‘natural’ sweetener. *Stevia* won.

My own thought is that the triterpene from the licorice fern is probably a banana slug repellent.

The Hybrid

Where the two ferns grow together they form a rare natural hybrid. This fascinating plant is not in cultivation as far as I know. So how do you get one? The answer is, make it.

A couple of years ago I mixed spores of *P. scolieri* and *P. glycyrrhiza* and sprinkled the mix on damp peat-

Perlite mixture. I now have a dense mat of competing tiny sporelings, a very few of which may be hybrids. I am willing to give little bits of the mixed culture to anyone who would be interested in teasing apart the plantlets and growing them on in damp peat in a plastic covered yoghurt container. Will there be hybrids? Why not find out?

If there is any demand I could set up a table or workshop with materials to show how to grow ferns from spores.



70th 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**
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 September for many opportunities like: bus captain, greeter, hospitality desk, flower arrangements, info desk, rhodo selling, keynote speaker guide, and many, many more!

Upcoming Events

2014	Event	Place	Fee
Sept 26 – 28	ARS Western Regional Conference, District 2	Everett, Washington	
Oct 6	VRS Monthly General Meeting	Mary Winspear Centre 7:30 PM	
Oct 12 – 19	<u>Pre-conference Tour</u> New Zealand International Conference 2014	Dunedin, New Zealand	\$NZ 2700 share pp-3300 single
Oct 20 – 24	New Zealand Rhododendron Association <u>70th International Rhodo Conference 2014</u> Registration <i>Registration After Sept. 1 = \$NZ100</i>	Dunedin, New Zealand	\$NZ 455
Oct 25 – 27	<u>Post-Conference Tour</u> New Zealand International Conference 2014	Dunedin, New Zealand	\$NZ 770 share pp-1000 single
Nov 10	VRS Photography Night	Garth Homer Centre 7:30 PM	
Dec. 8	VRS Christmas Potluck Dinner	Garth Homer Centre 6:30 PM	