



# The Victoria Rhododendron Society

## Newsletter

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

**April 2015**

e-mail: tkcmillan@telus.net

**Thirty-Fifth Year of Publication**

web page – <http://victoriarhodo.ca>

**Meeting: 7:30**

**Monday, April 13, 2015**

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

**Shannon Berch, "Influence of Mycorrhizae on Ericaceous Plants"**

Dr. Shannon Berch is a Research Scientist with the Government of British Columbia and adjunct professor with the University of British Columbia in Vancouver and with the Centre for Livelihoods and Ecology at Royal Roads University (RRU) in Victoria. Her topic is mycorrhizae and their influence on rhododendron growth.

### **REFRESHMENTS for the next meeting to be provided by:**

**Ellen Wellborn**

**Don and Joyce Whittle**

**Hazel Wilkins**

**Keiko and William Alkire**

**Sandra Allin**

**Cathie Arnold**

Please Email Betty Gordon at  
[bbgordon@shaw.ca](mailto: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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### **March's Talk on Rhododendron Species**

By Theresa McMillan

Bob Zimmermann's talk on the "Siren Song of Rhododendron Species," along with his pictures of extraordinary leaves, was enough to make any rhodo hybrid lover extend their interest to growing at least some species rhododendrons.

## VICTORIA RHODODENDRON SOCIETY BOARD

### President:

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

### 1st Vice President:

Position vacant

### Past President:

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Calvin Parsons 250-590-0489

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Bob's talk, along with beautiful colour pictures, is covered with more detail in the Winter 2015 edition of the journal of the American Society, which is available on paper or on line to our VRS members who also belong to the ARS.

Bob Zimmermann's trips to SE Tibet and China over several years show remarkable changes from remote villages in a sea of rhododendrons to the present. By 2013, expressways, interchanges, agribusiness have led to bulldozing and blasting of the mountains, putting rhododendrons under pressure.

This is why the seed from the ARS Seed Exchange of 1982 and the seed Bob has collected during his trips have been so important, to save species rhododendrons. Bob has extensively and carefully planted seeds in his Chimacum Woods in Port Ludlow, Washington.



*R. pendulum*



*R. erosum*

## ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS: For your consideration and discussion at the April meeting

### From Norma Senn, President

At our March meeting, the executive discussed the possibility of moving our regular Victoria Rhododendron Society meetings to the Mel Couvelier pavilion at the Horticultural Center of the Pacific north of Elk Lake. There are many positive points in making the move and a couple of negatives.

First, and foremost, the cost to rent the MC pavilion (\$150/night) is less than what we now pay at The Garth Homer Society (\$245/meeting). By moving our meeting location, the club would save \$95/meeting or \$855/year.



There is ample paved parking and the lot is well lit at night; the parking spaces are clearly marked. The walkway from the parking lot to the HCP courtyard is either via a few stone steps or by a wheel chair/walker ramp. Access to the pavilion is level.



The pavilion itself has new audio-visual equipment, including projector and screen. The sound system is via eight high quality speakers around the room. The room allows for various seating configurations and can easily hold a large crowd. There is a coffee/tea prep area. The floor is carpeted and the seats are comfortable. There are washrooms in the pavilion.

When daylight savings is in effect, our members would be able to walk through the Rhododendron Garden at HCP before the meetings. As most of you know, several of our members work in the Rhododendron garden every week and it would be great for more of us to see the results of their labour more often.



Like all local garden clubs, we need to entice new members to our club and signage about our meetings could be made available. By being at HCP, we will be in the midst of potential new members as the gardens have over 20,000 visitors each year. As well, the horticulture students and faculty might take the opportunity of staying on to join our meetings. This would apply to the HCP staff too. We do not get this exposure at The Garth Homer Society.

On the downside, for the time being, there is no place to store our library. We were told that HCP is working



on a plan to make secure storage available to us (and other garden clubs) for things like libraries and some small items. As of right now, however, we would have to arrange to store the library with one of our members and, in the interim our members wouldn't have library access until HCP develops a storage site. More information about storage space may be available by our April meeting.

A second negative, for some of us, is that the driving distance to HCP is greater than to Garth Homer. But for other members, the distance is less. Organized car pools might be a solution for those living in the Oak Bay/east Saanich area.

If the membership agrees with a move to the Hort Center, then we do have to stay with meeting on Monday nights. However, as I write this, we have the option of choosing either the first or second Monday of the month. Currently, we meet on the second Monday except for those months where there is a statutory holiday when we switch to the first Monday of the month. We can move our meetings to the first Monday of the month, and that would usually mean that the only month where we have a Monday holiday is September's Labor Day. Ian Duncan has checked into the logistics, and he says that we could arrange to hold our meetings at HCP on statutory holidays, if we wish. As members, would you attend a meeting on one of the stat holidays? I know that switching back and forth drives us all crazy and is confusing to the public as people are often unsure about when we are having a meeting. In addition to fewer meeting night changes, if we change our meeting night to the first Monday, we might be able to occasionally coordinate speakers with the Cowichan Valley Chapter. They meet on the first Wednesday of the month, so if we met on the first Monday, we could share in the costs of bringing in speakers from the US or from the Mainland. The speakers would benefit too as they would be able to speak to two clubs on one trip.

**With all these points in mind, we would like members to be prepared to discuss moving our meeting location at our April meeting.** If we're going to make any changes, we need to decide soon as our contract with Garth Homer will be coming up for renewal in late May. As well, if the membership decides that we should move our meeting location to HCP, then we also need to decide about leaving our meetings as is, on the second Monday (with the possible exception of holiday months), or moving our meeting night to the first Monday of the month. If the latter, we would have our first meeting in the fall on Labor Day, September 7<sup>th</sup> (or perhaps leave the first meeting for the second Monday of September (Sept 14<sup>th</sup>) for this year. If we change our meeting night to the 7<sup>th</sup>, then I will need to see if our September speaker is willing to come on the 7<sup>th</sup>.

After our discussion, we will **ask members to vote on their preferences.** The ballot will ask:

#1 Are you for or against changing the meeting site to HCP, starting in September, 2015?

Circle your choice:

I am in favour of changing the meeting location to HCP

or

I am not in favour of changing the meeting location

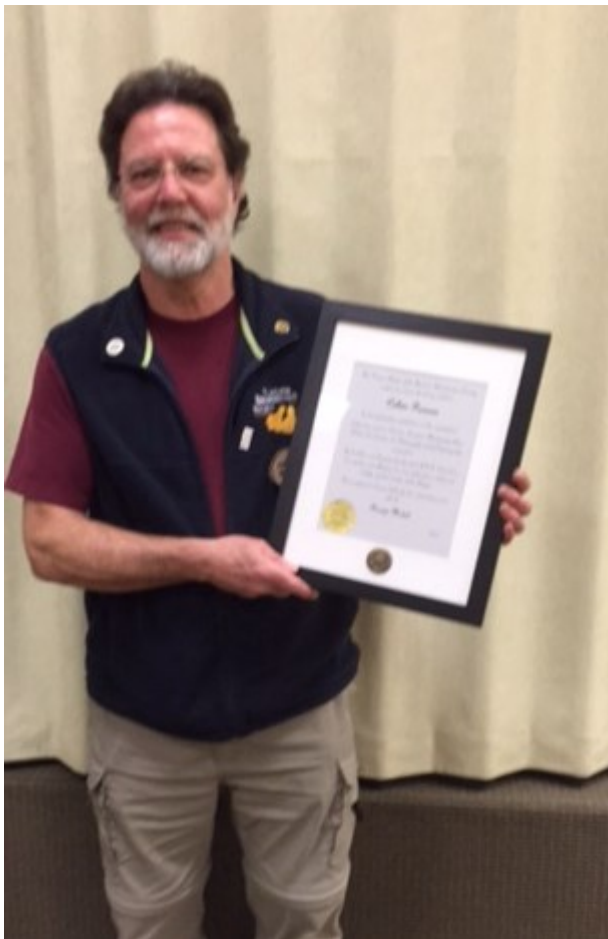
**If you vote yes to #1\*,** would you prefer the meeting night to remain on current Monday plan, or switch to the first Monday of the month?

#2 (circle your choice) I am in favour of switching the meeting night to the first Monday of the month  
or

I want the meeting night to remain on our current Monday evening plan

**\* If you vote no to question #1, then do not vote at all on question #2** If we stay at GH, then there is no choice as to meeting nights. **If the vote is to move to HCP**, then we've got to figure out a way for all members to vote on their preferred Monday, the first or the second.

I hope this is clear, but bring your questions and comments to the April meeting at The Garth Homer, and be prepared to vote on your preference. See you then, Norma Senn



### **CALVIN PARSONS**

The Victoria Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society is pleased to bestow the bronze medal onto Calvin Parsons for his outstanding contributions to this organization.

Calvin has served as director, president, membership chair, website co-ordinator and photography contest organizer for many years.

Calvin is also the Registrar for this May's 2015 A.R.S. Convention in Sidney-by-the-Sea. His expertise and willingness to serve make him a valued and highly regarded member of the Chapter.

For his outstanding service, we are happy to honour Calvin with the Bronze Medal. March, 2015.

## Welcome New Mem- ber

Joan Gowan



R. "Mrs Furnival "

### **Plant- a - Holics Sale is back at Abkhazi Garden**

#### **Attention all you plant geeks!!**

As there will be no U.Vic garden sale this year, this is the one to attend to help support the Friends of the Abkhazi Garden Society.

Abkhazi Garden, Saturday May 2nd-10-12. 1964 Fairfield Rd .

Lots of parking nearby at Margaret Jenkins School

Pacific Coast Irises, woodlanders, ferns, grasses, succulents, geraniums, fuchsias

Bring your garden tools to be sharpened by "Sharp & Sharper" while you shop and enjoy the garden.

From Rima Gardner, **Hardy Plant Group**. One of their members, **Birgit Piskor**, is having a huge plant sale this April 18 and 19th. As she writes:

I am getting rid of my garden, at least in its current incarnation, and have almost 2000 mostly 1, some 2-gallon perennials that will be available. There will be one more sale next spring and that will be that! It's a bit bittersweet but I am very excited to implement the changes and am sure the new garden will also be very beautiful but low, low maintenance.

April 18 + 19

10-2 each day

570 Niagara Street  
250.858.4334

There will also be select garden sculptures on sale including a limited number of large spheres which will be half price for this weekend only.

## **Rhododendron Species Project at Milner Gardens & Woodland.**

(Reprinted with permission from the Nanaimo Rhododendron Society's Newsletter, March 2015.)

A collection of species rhododendrons will be established at Milner. The five chapters of the ARS on Vancouver Island have pledged \$20,000 to the project which will be matched by Milner Gardens & Woodland. This idea was promoted by the late Harry Wright of the North Island Chapter in the 1990s and is finally being realized as resources become available.

An advisory board has been created with representatives from each of the five chapters and from the Milner Gardens and Woodland Society.

Jim Cadwaldr, a landscape architect and formerly the executive director of the gardens, has donated a landscape plan. He has been working with Wilfred Worland, a retired architect & Milner volunteer, Geoff Ball, the executive director, Pamela Murray, the lead interpretive guide at Milner, Art Lightburn and John England of MARS.

Approximately 5/8 of an acre has been designated for the project behind the gift shop and reflecting pool. A plan has been prepared for layout of entrance/exit, paths, and tree removal/retention. Construction is expected to begin this fall.

Last week the plant selection committee of the advisory board met to review the final draft of the landscape plan. A holding area will be established to collect the plants and maintain them until they are large enough for planting out. Volunteers will be responsible for looking after them.

Criteria for selection of plants for the collection include rare or endangered species, parents of hybrids at Milner, geographical representatives, and

companion plants.

Fundraising will also be a priority because more funds are needed to complete the project. Donations made to Milner Gardens and Woodland Society are tax deductible.

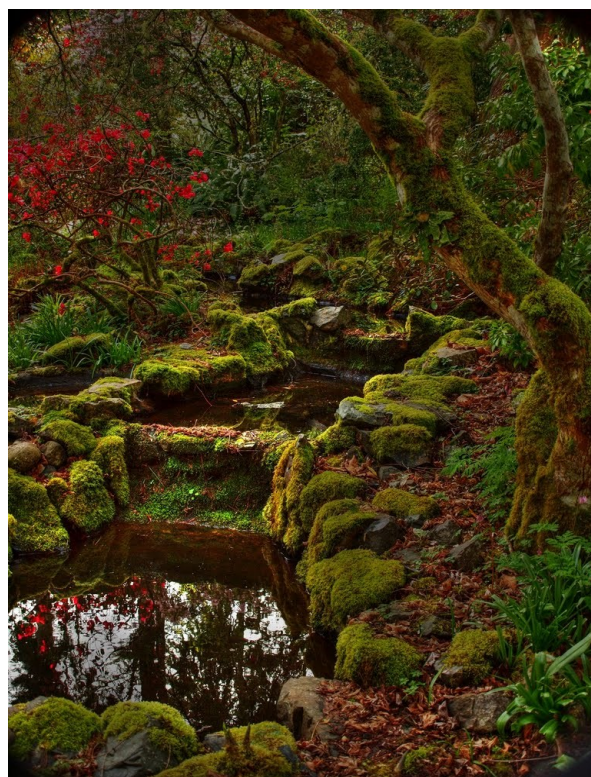
## **Further Report on Milner Woodland Gardens**

From Carol Dancer

The plan is to include 20% endangered species. A list has been put together of some preferred plants.

A group has been formed to investigate which plants we may be able to get from the Rhododendron Species Foundation. Provenance is important.

Suggestions have also been put forward for companion plants which will include both trees and herbaceous plants. One thought is to use some of our native plants but also to search out plants that grow with rhododendrons in their native habitat.



# Only 2 Seats Left!

Folks-this is it!! The English garden tour of a lifetime in the spring of 2015, May 14-25. In conjunction with Anderson Tours UK we are heading for Britain in the spring of 2015. Our 11 day tour includes 11 world class gardens and several historic sites in Southwest England on a deluxe coach. For further details, please contact:

[wedumont@hotmail.com](mailto:wedumont@hotmail.com) 250 743 9882

## Upcoming Events

April 13, 2015	Shannon Berch  Influence of Mycorrhizae on Ericaceous Plants	Garth Homer Center 7:30 pm
April 18-19	Birgit Piskor of the <b>Hardy Plant Group</b> is <b>selling</b> almost 2000 mostly 1, some 2-gallon perennials and selected garden sculptures (see page 6 for details)	570 Niagara Street 10-2 each day
April 19-21	Skagit Valley Tulip Festival	Wells Gray Tours; for itinerary see: <a href="http://www.wellsgraytours.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Skagit-Tulip-Festival-Tulalip.pdf">http://www.wellsgraytours.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Skagit-Tulip-Festival-Tulalip.pdf</a>
May 2	<b>The 'Plant- a - holics' Sale is back</b>	<b>Abkhazi Garden.</b> 1964 Fairfield Rd 10-12
May 6-10	70th ARS Convention	Mary Winspear Community Centre, Sidney, BC ( <a href="http://www.2015rhodo.ca">www.2015rhodo.ca</a> )
June 28, 2015. Sunday	June BBQ	The Gardens at HCP