



The Victoria Rhododendron Society

Newsletter

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June 2015

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Thirty-Fifth Year of Publication

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On Sunday, June 28, at noon, we will be having our annual Pot-luck luncheon at the home of Tom and Ann Widdowson, 4635 West Saanich Road, Northwest of the Wilkinson Road/West Saanich Road intersection.

VRS PICNIC SUNDAY, JUNE 28

Our June picnic lunch will be in the large garden at the Widdowson's (address above). There is parking for about 20 cars on the lawn of the Widdowson property, and extra parking on the opposite side of West Saanich Road. The side nearest the house is a bike lane.

For the Potluck, you are asked to bring a wrapped savory, salad or dessert.

Tags labeling eggs, dairy, nuts or flour for people with allergies will be much appreciated.

A fruit punch, tea and coffee are provided.

Lunch will be served about 1 p.m. and will feature barbequed salmon grilled to perfection by our volunteer chefs.

Please bring your own cutlery, plates and mugs and don't forget chairs to sit on!

Please donate a rhododendron, companion plant or another plant for our **free** raffle. Thanks to our generous growers, each year every member at the picnic has won at least one plant.

CONGRATULATIONS and THANKS!!!!

To all the Victoria Rhododendron Society volunteers and all the members of District 1 Rhododendron Chapters who helped make the 2015 American Rhododendron Society Convention in Sidney on May 6-10 a resounding success.

The more than four hundred attendees had all kinds of positive comments about the Convention, like the enjoyable food, the talks, and the wonderful private gardens opened for the garden tours.

NOTES FROM NORMA SENN, our president

HELP!

The Victoria Rhododendron Society needs a new membership coordinator for the 2015/16 year. If this is something you could do on behalf of the club, that would be great. The job is not too hard, but does

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require someone who is very comfortable with MS Excel spread sheets and keeping good records. Most of the work is done in the fall when our members are renewing their membership for the following year, but, now and then some work is needed at other times. It would be best if the membership coordinator could attend the fall meetings to receive renewals but we can certainly ask to have someone help if the coordinator is as unable to attend one of the meetings. Please let one of your executive know if this is something you'd be willing to do for the club.

We'd originally planned to hold the barbecue at HCP, but due to the very dry weather, we are not able to fire up the grills in the lower field. Since we all enjoy the salmon so much, we didn't want to cancel the salmon. **So our potluck luncheon will be at Ann and Tom Widdowson's home at noon on June 28th at 4635 West Saanich Road.** Everyone should bring a snack, salad, savory or dessert and his or her own cutlery, plates, cup or mug, chair and if possible, plants for the raffle. Car pooling is encouraged.

At our executive meeting on June 11, we discussed membership dues for 2016, and we are pleased to tell our members that for 2016, the annual membership for Victoria Rhododendron Society/ARS members, the fee will be \$30. The club will subsidize the remainder of the dues on behalf of each full member. We decided to do this as a way of thanking everyone for all their hard work at the convention.



Lorraine, Johanna and Evelyn preparing trusses to decorate Mary Winspear Centre, May 6



Decorations for the dining room



A gorgeous display of rhododendrons



ARS Conventioneers on the May 8 Garden Tour to Royal Roads University



Clockwise from the top left:

Moe and Johanna's Garden in Sooke, May 8.

Decorative cookies made for the tour delegates

Moe talking to some of the visitors, and some of the garden decorations.





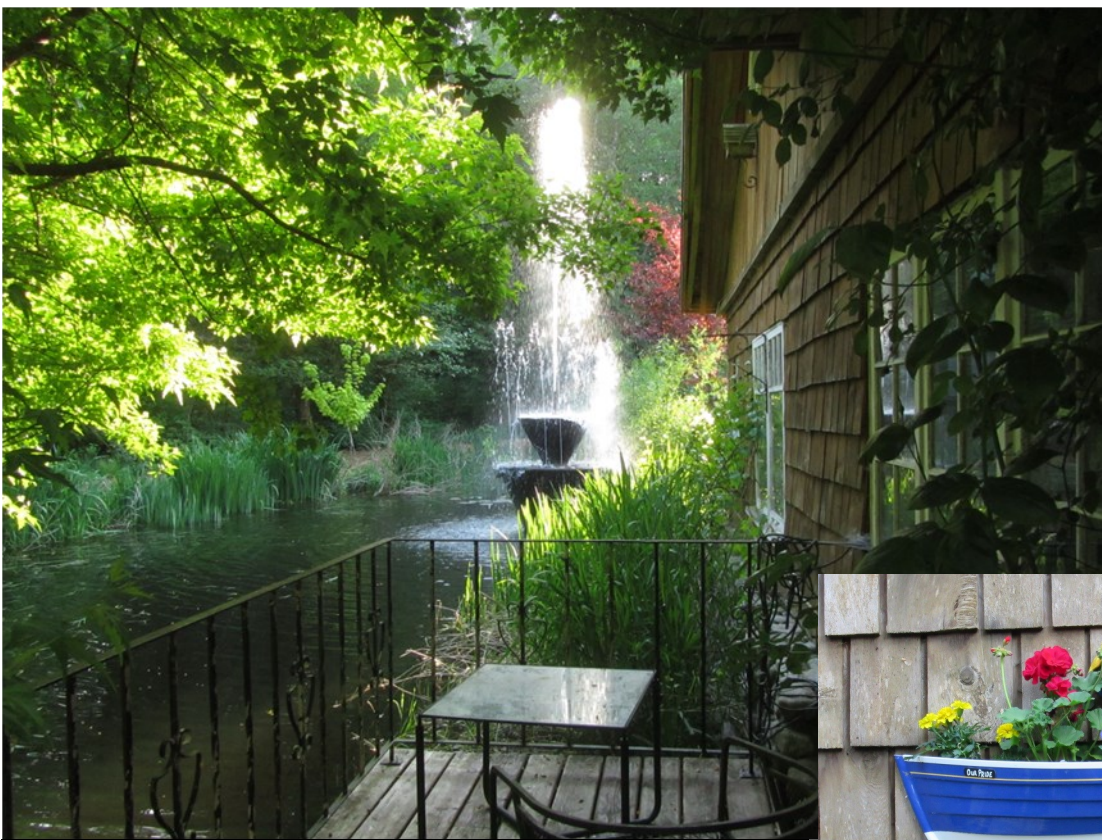
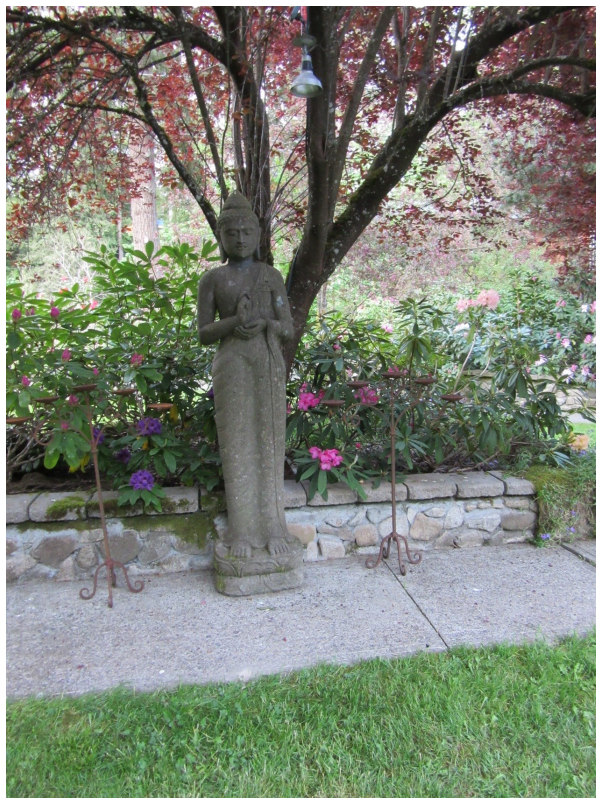
Roy and Lois Blackmore's Garden May 8th

Garden decorations and a water feature,
Fantasy in their forest.



Peter and Toti Lewis's Garden

Various fountains



Various of Peter Lewis's unique water fountains, one of his oriental themed statues and a 'flower' boat model on a shed wall.

New Rhododendron Species Discovered in Sidney, BC

Subtitle: Rock Stars of the Rhododendron World

by Barbara Staton

(Reprinted with permission from NRS Newsletter, Rhodovine.)

On May 9th - 11th a new rhododendron species, 'Rhodophotoholic', was discovered by rhodo enthusiasts attending the 70th American Rhododendron Society International Conference in Sidney by the Sea.

Here the new species is seen and they frantically capture a spectacular garden in bloom immediately after disembarking from their tour bus. A similar sighting of this new species occurred countless times throughout the 28 gardens on tour.



United by their inability to say “No” to seeing displayed rhodos for sale, a keen group of approximately 400 participants, some from as far away as New Zealand, arose at dawn; boarded a flotilla of tour buses; later dined in Sidney's beautiful Mary Winspear Convention Centre. Finally they listened intently or perhaps nodded off as internationally acclaimed “Rock Stars of the Rhododendron World” rounded out each day of the three day conference. These international 'Rhodo Rock Stars' were: Jim Barlup from the USA; Marc Colombel of France; Kenneth Cox of Scotland; Harold Greer, the Guru of West Coast Rhododendrons, from the USA; Guan Kai-yin from China; Lionel de Rothschild from England; and Hartwig Schepker from Germany. Each present-

ed interesting and varied perspectives from their broad skill sets and from their native lands.

Our NIRS chapter was represented by 16 keeners: Robert Argall, Nadine Boudreau, Lois Clyde, Jake & Claudia Ellis, Jill Gould, Woldfang Hoefgen, Arlene Hooper, Heather MacKenzie, Barb & Brian Staton, Judy Walker, Garth Wedemire & Sue Grant, and Lynn & Paul Wurz. Some days we joined each other on the daily bounty of tours, while on other days Brian & I seemed to be the sole bus tour survivors, alone amongst 50-60 new acquaintances. The plethora of tour options left us breathless and in awe of the variety and the size of the Victoria gardens. The tour buses were in constant motion weaving in and around the highways and the

narrow roads of Sidney & Saanich, then manoeuvring some switchbacks of Triangle Mountain in Langford. This made for some hairy rides, but the buses always arrived safely and punctually at our many destinations.



Our friendly tour guide, Ian, made sure that we left the gardens on time and were herded back onto our tour bus adhering to the very tight schedule. Here Ian is featured wearing an old police clown costume that he rescued from his father's tickle trunk. It was complete with a whistle made out of an old Campbell's soup can and a Billy club fashioned from a chair leg. His sense of humor and his knowledge of the local area certainly brightened our day.

It was extremely difficult to select a favourite garden at the end of each day as each garden was uniquely and lovingly presented to all 'Rhodophotoholics', so a comparison was difficult to make. In some of the larger public gardens such as UVic's Finnerty Gardens, Hatley Castle of Royal Roads, Dominion Brooks Garden and Horticultural Center of the Pacific we were guided by expert head gardeners or volunteers as the “Rhodophotoholics” wandered through many different

display gardens. At the end of each day we could not have toured one more garden and the 'Rum Runner Pub' on the beach in Sidney was a welcome favourite watering hole for a round of 'Happy Hour' beverages and shared memories before dinner and a 'Rhododendron Rock Star' presentation.

The beauty of 'Sidney by the Sea' enhanced each day, as did the friendliness of the countless volunteers and garden hosts. The enthusiasm of all host gardeners was much appreciated and all 'Rhodophotoholics' returned home enchanted and inspired with new ideas for their own ever changing, ever growing gardens.

A huge bouquet of 'Thank Yous' to all who spent the last two years organizing and hosting this incredible conference. We are blessed to live on such a beautiful, rhodo friendly island.



One of the banners for the Convention on display in Sidney.



The streets of Sidney during the ARS Rhododendron Convention.

UPCOMING EVENTS

General Meeting September 8, 2015	Earl Daneluk	German Rhododendron Hybridizers and Hybrids
General Meeting October 5, 2015 (1st Mon.)	Linda Gilkeson	Pests & Diseases of Rhododendrons
October 16-18, 2015	ARS Fall Conference	Long Island, New York
General Meeting November 9, 2015	Member's Photography Night	
General Meeting December 14, 2015	Christmas Potluck Dinner 6:30 pm	