



The Victoria Rhododendron Society

Newsletter

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March 2015

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Thirty-Fifth Year of Publication

web page – <http://victoriarhodo.ca>

Meeting: 7:30

Monday, March 9, 2015

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

**Bob Zimmermann “The Siren Song of the Species”
And the AGM of the Victoria Rhododendron Society**

Bob Zimmermann tells us: I have been growing rhodies for over 45 years, but concentrating on species since 1982. Our nursery, Chimacum Woods, is dedicated to the preservation of the wild gene pool of rhodies by making plants grown from wild collected seed available to the gardening public. I have travelled to China four times in search of seed, once to Tibet as well as Japan, Italy and the Eastern US. I am an English major, not a botanist, just trying to make sense of it all.

REFRESHMENTS for the next meeting to be provided by:

William and Christina Vandermale

Peter Vaartnou

Elizabeth and Patrick Von Aderkas

Geoffrey Voss

Jackie Walker

Stan Warlow

Ken and Madeleine Webb

Please Email Betty Gordon at
bbgordon@shaw.ca (or phone 250.479.0210)
if you are coming with your wrapped good-
ies/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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February's Talk on Plants with Winter Interest

By Theresa McMillan

Rafe Mooney's talk was accompanied by the fragrance of
winter-flowering plants like daphne odora, witch-hazels,
and wintersweet from which he had cut fresh pieces
which were passed around to us.

He told us more about Doris Page herself, whom the HPC

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Winter Garden was named after.

Rafe showed us pictures of the Winter Garden as it had been a few days before, during this exceptionally mild early spring.

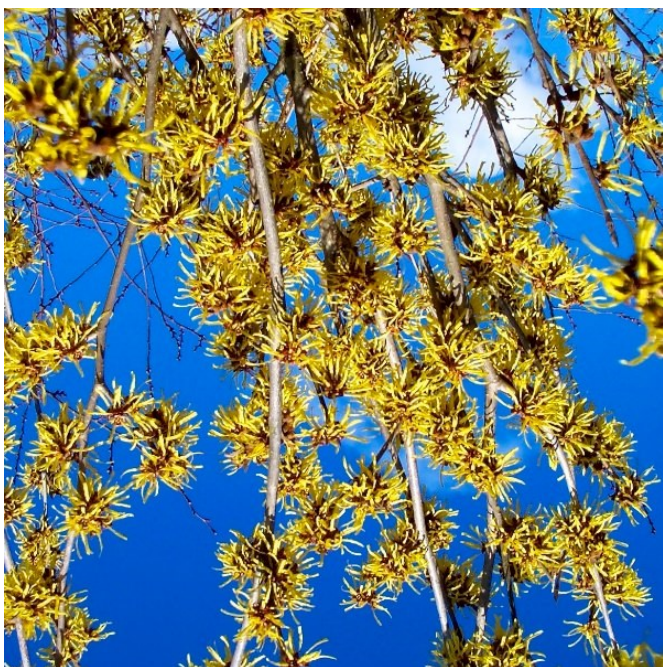
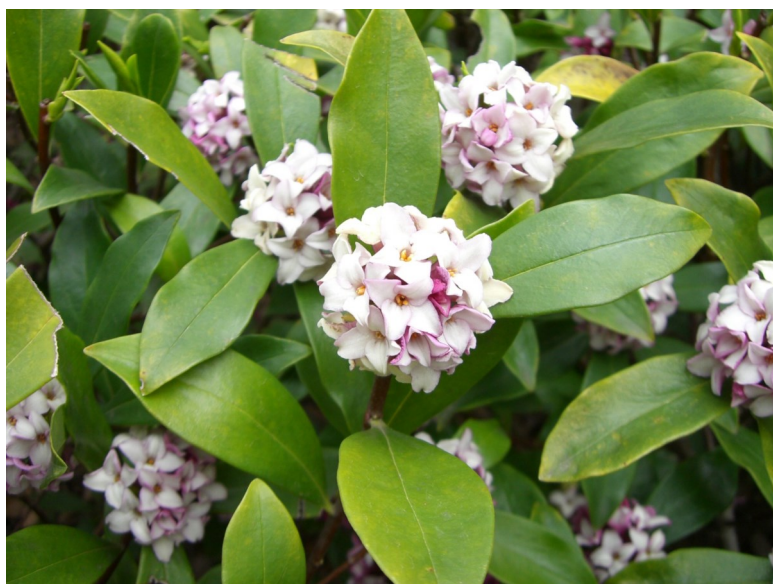
He had pictures of the gardens in the different seasons, when leaves colour in the fall, when extraordinary barks and shapes are revealed on leafless trunks in winter, and in spring when swatches of white snowdrops are mingled with other coloured plants. Bulb meltdown in later spring is hidden by plants like geranium 'Roxanne'. Black mondo grass is distributed down slopes so, along with other blooming plants, it looks like streams.

Rafe also spoke about the proper cultivation of winter blooming plants like helleborus, which should have the old leaves cut off in November or December. Natural hybrid seedlings of the common pink helleborus orientalis are typically unattractive, so should be removed in spring and summer. Helleborus argutifolia (Corsican hellebore) should be cut right down to the base after blooming to prevent it from getting too sprawly. Pulmonaria should have its old leaves cut down in January, so that the new flowers and leaves look fresh.

Rafe has kindly provided us with a list of the plants he mentioned in his talk. Several of the plants could be difficult to find; nurseries seldom carry them in fall and winter, slow times for sales at that time of the year. Special orders would be the best way to acquire these plants.



Helleborus orientalis



From upper left, clockwise:

Hamamelis X intermedia 'Diane'

Edgeworthia chrysatha "Gold Rush"

Cimonathus praecox 'wintersweet'

Daphne odora 'Winter Daphne'

Hamamelis mollis 'Chinese witchhazel'

RAFE MOONEY's LIST OF PLANTS from the Doris Page Winter Garden at the HCP

(many were mentioned in his talk on Feb. 2, 2015)

Winter Interest - Bloom:

Eranthis hyemalis "Winter aconite"
Cyclamen coum "Winter Cyclamen"
Galanthus nivalis "Common snowdrop"
Helleborus x nigercors 'Honeyhill Joy'
Helleborus argutifolius "Corsican hellebore"
Helleborus foetidus 'Wester Flisk'
Helleborus x hybridus 'Kingston Cardinal'
Rhododendron moupinense
Rhododendron 'Bo Peep'
Erica carnea 'Kramer's Red' "Winter blooming heather"
Erica carnea 'Nathalie' "Winter blooming heather"
Erica cinerea 'Celebration' "Summer blooming heather"
Erica cinerea 'Lime Soda' "Summer Blooming Heather"
Pulmonaria saccharata "Lungwort"
Mahonia x media 'Charity' or 'Winter Sun'
Hamamelis mollis "Chinese witch hazel" (yellow blooming)
Hamamelis x intermedia 'Jelena' (rusty-orange blooming)
Hamamelis x intermedia 'Diane' (red blooming)
Cornus mas "Cornelian cherry"
Edgeworthia chrysantha 'Gold Rush' "Paperbush"

Winter Interest - Fragrance:

Sarcococca confusa "Sweet box"
Lonicera fragrantissima "Winter honeysuckle"
Chimonanthus praecox "Wintersweet"
Daphne odora "Winter Daphne"
Edgeworthia chrysantha 'Gold Rush' "Paperbush"

Winter Interest - Bark:

Cornus alba 'Sibirica' "Siberian dogwood"
Cornus sanguinea 'Midwinter Fire'
Acer conspicuum 'Phoenix' "Snakebark maple"
Acer griseum "Paperbark maple"

Winter Interest – Berries:

Gaultheria mucronata 'Signaal' and 'Alba'
Ilex verticillata "Deciduous holly"

Skimmia japonica

Callicarpa bodinieri var. *giraldii* 'Profusion' "Beautyberry"

Ruscus aculeatus "Butcher's broom"

Winter Interest – Foliage:

Pinus contorta 'Chief Joseph'

Ophiopogon planiscapus 'Nigrescens' "Black mondo grass"

Sedum rupestre 'Angelina'

Osmanthus heterophyllus 'Goshiki' "False holly"

Osmanthus heterophyllus 'Aureomarginatus' "False holly"

Lonicera nitida 'Baggesen's Gold' "Golden boxleaf honeysuckle"

Nandina domestica (cultivars) "Heavenly bamboo"

Euphorbia 'Glacier Blue'

Skimmia 'Magic Marlot'

Cupressus macrocarpa 'Goldcrest' "Goldcrest Monterey cypress"

Winter Interest – Structure:

Mahonia x media 'Charity' or 'Winter Sun'

Daphniphyllum humile

Corylus avellana 'Contorta' "Harry Lauder's walking stick"



The Tube of Toothpaste

By Norman Todd,

**re-printed from the Victoria Rhododendron Society Newsletter,
2003**

I wish that there were more things in life that were like the tube of toothpaste. Routinely, I go to the ever-growing grocery list on the side of the fridge and add 'toothpaste'. Two weeks later, I am still getting another squeeze out of the old tube. There are very few things in this consumer-driven society of ours that keep on giving a little more the way the tube of toothpaste does. Someone said that a frugal cook squeezes a lemon until the pips squeak but it's easy to feel frugal with the tube of toothpaste.

Families and friends are notable givers of the extra squeeze. Pets often give good returns on emotional investment but in the inert category it's hard to think of many things that give that little bit more than expected.

I think gardens can be likened to the tube of toothpaste. At any rate, in my experience, the garden's rate of return increases with time. Time, helped a little by our labour, usually results in the returns getting bigger and better each year. I know a time will come when things are just too big and cramped and overgrown but even after more than a quarter century, my garden hasn't reached that stage yet and my personal 'best before' date will surely come, if not already reached, before that of the garden's.

You often hear it said, “There is no such thing as an instant garden”. In my opinion that’s a very happy situation. An instant garden implies constancy – it has already achieved its limit. There will be never be that pleasant raising of eyebrows when that extra, unexpected extrusion is laid on the toothbrush.

I would classify some plants as being of the toothpaste tube genre. The English primrose (*primula vulgaris*) always surprises me with its bountiful giving. It shows a bloom for the six darkest months of the year. *Cyclamen hederifolium* (*neapolitanum*) is a ten-month plant. Its heart shaped leaves have silver markings – as individual as our fingerprints –and they persist for 10 months. It flowers for over three months – from August to November. *Potentilla fruticosa* blooms from May until October as do many of the *cistus*.

Among rhododendrons, I would put ‘Ernie Dee’ in the toothpaste class. He blooms for five months – half in the fall and half in the spring. ‘Lee’s Scarlet’ is another plant that seems to give that unexpected extra, blooming for five months over the winter. ‘Noyo Brave’ always surprises me with its polished decorum. It is as nattily dressed as a behind-the-bench NHL head coach. I would pick ‘Dreamland’ as the female equivalent in sartorial refinement. ‘Nancy Evans’ always gives more than she gets. I don’t know who ‘Nancy Evans’ is in human terms but I would surely like to give her a big squeeze for all the surplus squeezes she has given me.

Arbutus trees keep on giving – leaves and bark and berries and even branches – but this is not a true gift like that bonus from the toothpaste tube. It takes considerable effort to blow all of this detritus onto the neighbours’ property. It does, however, make good mulch.

On the other hand, some things are always taking. Have you noticed how much it now costs to let the bank use your money? Service charges are bigger than interest payments. Banks are more like vacuum cleaners than toothpaste tubes. And for some strange reason, the dues we pay to get this newsletter seem to keep sucking in more of our hard earned cash. Thank goodness most of us think the interest we get from being a member is still worth the annual investment.

Still, it’s probably best to concentrate on the things and events that perk us up with their surprising generosity rather than mope on the leech-like cupidity of our contemporary culture. “The little things are great to a little man.”



Primula vulgaris



Cyclamen hederifolium



Potentilla fruticosa

2015 ARS CONVENTION

Sidney, BC, Canada

May 6 – 10, 2015

Fabulous Rhododendron Garden Tours

Location: Mary Winspear Centre

Come join us at the convenient Mary Winspear Community Centre, 2243 Beacon Ave. in spectacular Sidney-by-the-Sea, BC, Canada.



International Keynote Speakers

Jim Barlup, Washington State
Marc Colombel, France
Kenneth Cox, Scotland
Harold Greer, Oregon
Guan Kaiyun, China
Lionel de Rothschild, England
Hartwig Schepker, Germany



Champagne Lace', the official convention rhododendron is a magnificent hybrid donated by Jim Barlup.



Check www.2015rhodo.ca for Registration Forms,
Schedule and Garden Tours.



ARS 2015 Convention—WE STILL NEED MORE HELP!!

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

Upcoming Events

March 9, 2015	Bob Zimmermann The Siren Song of the Species	Garth Homer Center
April 13, 2015	Shannon Berch Influence of Mycorrhizae on Ericaceous Plants	Garth Homer Center
April 19-21	Skagit Valley Tulip Festival	Wells Gray Tours; for itinerary see: http://www.wellsgraytours.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Skagit-Tulip-Festival-Tulalip.pdf
May 6-10	70th ARS Convention	Mary Winspear Community Centre, Sidney, BC (www.2015rhodo.ca)
June 28, 2015. Sunday	June BBQ	The Gardens at HCP