



The Victoria Rhododendron Society

Newsletter

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

March 2016

tkmcmillan@gmail.com

Thirty-Sixth Year of Publication

<http://victoriarhodo.ca>

GENERAL AND AGM MEETING 7:30

MONDAY, March 14, 2016

GARTH HOMER CENTRE

813 DARWIN AVENUE, VICTORIA, B. C.

Speaker: Paul deGreeff

On March 14, **Paul deGreeff** will discuss 'Gardening with Rainwater; rain gardens & managing rainwater', a hot topic with another dry summer looming.

Paul deGreeff was educated in physical geography at the University of Victoria and is now a partner in a small young landscape architecture office in Victoria, BC that specializes in site adaptive planning and design, rain water management, and landscape restoration.

In This Issue

- ◇ **Editor's Notes**----- pg. 1
- ◇ **AGM Reminder**----- pg. 2
- ◇ **Problem with Canadian Maidenheads Part 1**---- pg. 2
- ◇ **Wear Your Name Tag**----- pg. 4
- ◇ **Thank you, Joe Harvey** ----- pg. 5
- ◇ **Our Trophies**----- pg. 6
- ◇ **Upcoming Events**----- pg. 7

Editor's Notes

Review of the panel, "Hot Topics on Rhodos", meeting Feb. 1, 2016

by Theresa McMillan

We had five panelists that night, Roy Blackmore, Bill Gordon, Sharon Joseph, Sean Rafferty and Dean Goard. Questions from the members were not the usual, like pruning or fertilizing of rhododendrons. There were more on what types of gardens the panelists have. For example, Bill Gordon's garden soil is clay, with rhodos perched on top. Bill uses bark mulch from McNutt's to good effect.

Roy Blackmore's rocky hilly garden has mostly good drainage. Several rhododendrons are

REFRESHMENTS for the next meeting to be provided by:

Joe & Linda Harvey

John & Alison Hawkins

Siggi Heckel

**Paton Hetherington &
Ryan Barry**

Lorraine Hoy

Elaine Hoole

Please email Betty Gordon at 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

President:

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

Acting Vice President:

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

Past President:

Calvin Parsons 250-590-0489
victoriarhododendron@gmail.com

Treasurer:

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

Secretary:

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

Membership:

Ellen Wellborn 250-479-1898
ekwellborn@sha.ca
Carolyn Marquardt 250-477-8387
tonymarquardt@shaw.ca

Members-at-Large:

Marjory Brice 250-658-1850
stephen.brice@richardsongmp.com
Ian Duncan 250-479-0820
duncani@telus.net
Carrie George 250-642-3176
carrie.g@shaw.ca
Kathy McKay 250-656-7473
kbtamckay@gmail.com
Theresa McMillan 250-478-3515
tkmcmillan@telus.net
Bill McMillan 250-478-3515
wtmcmillan@telus.net
Carolyn Marquardt 250-477-8387
tonymarquardt@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
victoriarhododendron@gmail.com
<http://victoriarhodo.ca>

(Continued from page 1)

perched on rocks, with coarse bark mulch mound-
ed around them. They needed supplementary
water last summer.

Sean Rafferty's property at Shirley (past Sooke)
has two natural creeks, and so usually no water
problem in the summer. But last summer's hot
and dry weather dried up his creeks and stressed
his rhododendrons.

In rhododendrons' native habitat, Sean told us,
during the summer monsoon, rhodos get water
every day. They also get sparse or no fertilizer.
And they look lovely!

Roy, Bill and Sean's gardens have lots of space
and are in the forest, so pruning is not neces-
sary, unlike the smaller gardens so many of us
have.



Problem Canadian Maidenhairs - Part 1

Joe Harvey

Grasp the leaf, plunge it into water, pull it out.
Your hand will be wet, the leaf bone dry.

This little miracle of nature so impressed the an-
cient Greeks that they called the plant something
like *a-diantos*, not wettable.

Science borrows words from classical Greek but
writes them down in Latin (for many centuries the
international language). Thus the word was trans-
literated *Adiantum*, *a-dee-AN-tum*. That name, in
various forms, has been in use for probably over
3000 years. It is beautiful. Use it. We call them
maidenhairs.

The world's tallest maidenhair fern grows on the
island of Cuba; it tops 3m. The world's smallest

grows in nature only on Vancouver Island. My old plant of the latter, in 2015, a good year, made it to 6cm. Horticulturally this is an important plant. The RHS has given it the Award of Garden Merit. It is the rock gardener's ideal fern, excellent for troughs and rock gardens.

There are about 200 species of *Adiantum* widely distributed across the world. The Canadian plants all belong a small subgroup called the birdsfoot maidenhairs. (I am ignoring one species whose only Canadian location is a rock wall at Fairmont Hot Springs).

When Carl Linnaeus in Sweden received a maiden-hair specimen from the Virginia colony, he noticed that the leaf stalks (stipes) were unusual for a fern. The stipes grew straight up without any branches or leaflets for a distance, then divided several times more or less horizontally to bear the leaflets. Linnaeus thought that the black stipe with the top forks looked like a bird's foot (he had a vivid imagination), so he called it *pedatum*, *pe-DA-tum*, meaning (bird's) foot.

The name *Adiantum pedatum* was put into Linnaeus's 1753 book which was later adopted as the



Adiantum pedatum

starting point for the names of plants.

I mention the above because the birdsfoot maidenhairs are widely distributed from Newfoundland to Alaska, also Japan and Korea to India and Nepal.

Now when a plant is distributed from Newfoundland to Nepal you can bet your bottom dollar that

explorers are going to come across specimens that are, in their opinion, different. They have the right to give their special plant a varietal or subspecies name to tell the world this is different from the plain, plodding, ordinary, original discovery. Boy, has this happened!

Many of these additional names are attached to plants from exposed habitats. Dwarf specimens seem to get people excited. Many names are of no significance: a moose may have slept on it, or it may be a vanity name to puff up a publication. The literature (and nurseries) are full of these mostly superfluous names. But there is some resolution which I will explain in part 2.

First I should explain the two different ways in which the name *Adiantum pedatum* is used. As the first of the birdsfoots to be named it gets to represent the whole group. It is the aggregate name, expressed in publications as *sensu lato* which translates, 'in the broad sense'. For instance in the Flora of China the entry is simply *Adiantum pedatum*. How to interpret this? I doubt that the Chinese plant is exactly identical to the Virginia one, so this is a *sensu lato* usage. The literature is full of this usage and it can be confusing.

The second way is to go to the original specimen and define it in the narrow, or strict way – *sensu stricto*. All names are attached to an individual specimen, the 'type' specimen, in this case a plant sent by van Royen to Linnaeus from Virginia. (It is in Burlington House at the Linnaean Society in Piccadilly, London). Detailed examination of the type then will define exactly what its characteristics are and how it is distinguished from similar but distinct (to a botanist) species.

Thus *Adiantum pedatum sensu stricto* is the tall, slightly rank set of plants which grow in the woodlands in eastern North America. In British Columbia we have something else but nurseries have mostly not caught up yet.

Flora North America is a vast collaborative scheme to publish an authoritative account of all the plants in North America. It has stumbled on for over 40 years in fits and starts. Volumes come out when they are finished. They take a long time and many hundreds of people are involved (yours

truly included). Each genus has an author whose job is to cut through the accumulated clutter of hundreds of years and come up with the best modern account. Frankly the volumes are unreadable, being written in technicalese. But the idea is that they can form the basis for more popular writings.

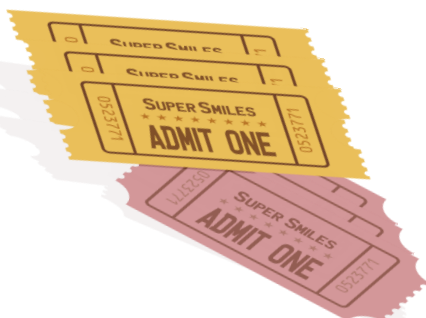
Good news. The fern volume is out. And the pedate maidenhairs? Three species. Only three! How did British Columbia's mini-gem fare? Not well. Learn what happened in Part 2.



Wear your name tag and get a **free** raffle ticket!!!



At the last executive meeting we decided that anyone wearing a name tag will receive a free raffle ticket. We do have several new members in our club and we'd like to make it as easy as possible for them to get to know everyone's name. If you don't currently have a name tag, please stop by the membership desk and pick one up.





Thank you, Joe Harvey

by Theresa McMillan

We want to thank Joe Harvey for his educational and often amusing articles he has submitted to us over the years. The VRS Newsletter has been featuring his articles on botany, rhododendrons, and other plants.

From a 2004 series on "To Spray or Not to Spray", Joe wrote:

"From a brief note this piece has grown into a wide-ranging polemic, so let me introduce it with a short biography to explain where I am coming from. I started my undergraduate career at King's College in Newcastle upon Tyne (now the University of Newcastle upon Tyne) intending to take a degree in chemistry. But my grandfather and parents had given me a love of plants and I switched at the end of my first year to the Department of Botany which happened at the time to be a centre for plant physiology and biochemistry. I left with a degree in

Botany with a minor in microbiology. So although my friends think of me as a botanist in the 18th Century Linnean sense, I have always kept up my background interest in what goes on inside cells and in plant chemistry. What follows is a perspective derived from a lifetime of study of plants, chemistry and history.

In my early years in Halifax NS, universities were in a state of rapid expansion (one even hired me), and we occasionally got a little money from the Graduate Faculty to invite distinguished researchers to visit, give a public lecture and commune with graduate students."

Joe's earliest articles are in our Website <http://victoriarhodo.ca> in the section labeled ARCHIVES. Archives have been organized into years, and names of the writers and their articles follow. They begin with year 2006 and extend back prior to 1999. To access any of Joe's articles, simply click on it.

The Newsletters section begins with September 2007 and ends with December 2015. The latest two from 2016 will be added soon. To read any one of Joe's articles, again click on it .

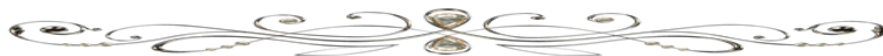
I began editing this Newsletter in November 2007. From that time, I will list Joe's articles by date and name as follows:

December 2007	"Xeriscaping with Rhododendrons", part 1
January 2008	"Xeriscaping with Rhododendrons," part 2
March 2008	"Sex Drive in Rhododendrons"
April 2008	"Corrections in Rhododendron Seed Names"
November 2008	"Trees that Love Chain Saws"

Cont'd Page 6

In March 2009, Joe began a series of articles under the names, "ODDTHOUGHTS" because as he wrote, "the ideas came from Joe Harvey's fevered brain".

March 2009	Oddthoughts 1	<u>"Wallace, the Origin of Species"</u> .
April 2009,	Oddthoughts 2	<u>"Wild Orchids, Helleborines"</u>
May 2009,	Oddthoughts 3	<u>"English/Spanish Problem"</u> (Bluebells all over Oak Bay)
June 2009,		<u>"Tofino in March"</u>
September 2009	Oddthoughts 4	<u>"Apples can Kill You"</u>
October 2009	Oddthoughts 5	<u>"Viola 'labradorica' - Imposter!"</u> (weed-like viola)
November 2009	Oddthoughts 6	<u>"The Perfect Little Black Seed"</u>
December 2009	Oddthoughts 7	<u>"Goldilocks and the Three Ferns"</u>
February 2010	Oddthoughts 8	<u>"Sugar-Coated Seeds"</u>
March 2010	Oddthoughts 9	<u>"Our Beautiful Skunk Cabbage"</u> (Western vs Eastern types)
April 2010	Oddthoughts 10	<u>"Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary"</u> (marmalade and quince)
June 2010	Oddthoughts 11	<u>"Rhubarb for Barbarians"</u>
November 2010	Oddthoughts 12	<u>"When Nice Plants Go Bad, The New Weeds"</u>
May 2011	Oddthoughts 13	<u>"Can Plants Count?"</u> (spiral seed patterns, as in sunflowers)
October 2011		<u>"The Lazy Gardener"</u>
January 2013	Oddthoughts 14	<u>"Tiger, Tiger"</u> , a type of striped flower
September 2014		<u>"Ferns with Hairy Feet"</u>
November 2014		<u>"On Amaryllises"</u>
December 2014		<u>"Golden Yew"</u>



Our Trophies

by Lois Blackmore

If you have a VRS trophy from previous years, it must be returned at the March meeting, or at the April meeting at the latest. Please return it cleaned and ready to be presented at the May 9 meeting.

Our major public display will be at the Mary Winspear Centre on Saturday, May 7. We would like this show to be spectacular in every way. We have fine new vases that will add to the beauty of our trusses.

Our judged show will be at our regular meeting on May 9. Our members will aid the judging of the entries for the first time. This will be different and more inclusive way of judging.

More information to follow at the meeting and in the Newsletter.



Upcoming Events

2016	Event	Place	Fee
Mar 14 7:30	General Meeting and AGM Paul deGreeff - Gardening with Rainwater: rain gardens & managing rainwater	Garth Homer Centre	
Mar 17	 Happy St. Patrick's Day		
Mar 21 7:30	Propagation Group Meeting	TBA Call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	
Mar 27	 Happy Easter		
Apr 8-9 9:00-3:00	<u>VIRAGS Annual Spring Show and Sale</u>	Cadboro Bay United Church	By Donation
Apr 11 7:30	General Meeting with guest Gordon MacKay The Two Georges: Plant Introductions of George Forrest & George Sheriff	Garth Homer Centre	
Apr 18 7:30	Propagation Group Meeting	TBA call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	
Apr 20-24	ARS Convention <u>Fort Magruder Hotel and Conference Center</u>	Williamsburg, Virginia	Registration required
Apr 30 TBA	Plant Sale Marquardt's, 4640 Cordova Bay Rd., Victoria	The Marquardt's	
May 7 TBA	Truss Show Mary Winspear Centre, 2243 Beacon Ave W., Sidney	Mary Winspear Centre	
May 9 7:30	General Meeting Members' Truss Show Bring your trusses	Garth Homer Centre	
May 16 7:30	Propagation Group Meeting	TBA call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	
Jun 13 7:30	Propagation Group Meeting	TBA call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	
Jun 26 NOON	Sunday BBQ Location: TBA	TBA	
Sep 12 7:30	General Meeting TBA	Garth Homer Centre	
Sep 19 7:30	Propagation Group Meeting	TBA call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	
Oct 3 7:30	General Meeting TBA	Garth Homer Centre	
Oct 17 730	Propagation Group Meeting	TBA call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	
Nov 1	Photos due Final Day to submit photos for Photography Night at the November 14 General Meeting		