



The Victoria Rhododendron Society

Newsletter

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

October 2016

tkmcmillan@telus.net

Thirty-Sixth Year of Publication

<http://victoriarhodo.ca>

MEETING 7:30

MONDAY, October 3, 2016

Couvelier Pavilion at the HCP Gardens

505 Quayle Road, VICTORIA, B. C.

Doors Open 7:00

Speaker: Bill Dumont, Topic: UK Tour May 2015 by the Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society

Bill Dumont, the tour leader and organizer, is a professional forester and consultant has been doing forestry and garden tours for more than three decades and will present the highlights of gardens and sites visited including learning experiences from participants on garden design and content.

In This Issue

- ◇ Editor's Notes ----- pg 1
- ◇ Notes from the Board ----- pg 4
- ◇ Lapageria, how to grow it ----- pg.5
- ◇ Photography Evening, Nov. 7 -----pg. 7
- ◇ Upcoming Events-----pg. 8

Editor's Notes

VRS Monthly Meeting, Monday, Sept. 5, 2016
by Theresa McMillan and Lois Blackmore

For some months, the members of the VRS Board were considering the advantages of moving our monthly meeting from the Garth Homer Centre, 813 Darwin Avenue in Victoria to the Mel Couvelier Pavilion at the Horticultural Centre of the Pacific. In the spring, our members voted to support that move.

Some worried that the Sept. 5 meeting would not be well attended. It was on a holiday Monday, the last long weekend of the summer and many members would have other plans. There were concerns that the new location would be more rural, and would be far away from the more central part of Victoria.

REFRESHMENTS

for the next meeting to be provided by:

Ann & Surinder
Kumar

Peter Lewis

Thurston & Mary
Lacalli

Arthur Lightburn

Susan Lindquist

David & Agnes Lynn

Please email Betty Gordon at

bbgordon@shaw.ca or (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

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The day turned rainy and the major part of the meeting was going to be outside, a tour of the rhododendron garden. As the garden is maintained and nurtured by some of the VRS members, the board believed that a tour of the new location and tour of this garden was an ideal situation.

Nevertheless, even on a rainy day, sixty-three members came, most in the fall outfit for the Pacific North West, a rain jacket. There was much chatting to one another, catching up on summer news, drinking coffee or tea before the formal part of the meeting took place. Tasty desserts in hand, many members headed out to the clammy dusk of the Gardens.

The guided tours, led by Ian Duncan, Bill McMillan and Calvin Parsons showed the garden and explained or answered question from the members of the groups. Unfortunately, it was too dark for photographs, but people were able to see how large and various the HCP Gardens really are. After the tours there was our raffle, with several fine-looking plants and even a bottle of wine, before the meeting came to a close.

Suggestions and recommendations from the board reminded people about being able to use the staff parking. Another suggestion was for members to bring a flashlight to the meetings for more easily walking to and from the parking lot. As winter approaches, we also recommend asking others to walk in groups or in pairs if needed.



Rhodo Garden in 1998 after renovation



Rhodo Garden on September 21, 2016





NOTES FROM THE BOARD

By Lois Blackmore

There is a motion from District 1 to ask the ARS to establish a fee for ARS members who receive the journal electronically

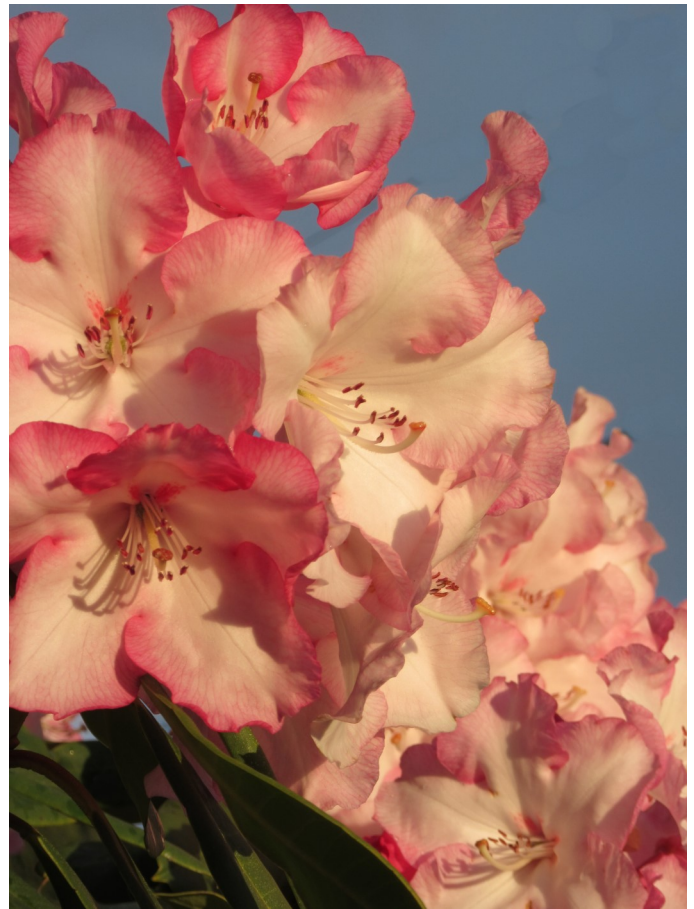
Fees for our members in 2016 are \$35 for ARS, \$25 for local membership

Programs for 2017 include: Brenda McDonald, Bernie Dinter, Carolyn Marquardt, Question and Answer evening, Truss Show and Picnic

The Legacy Garden at the Mary Winspear Centre continues and further planting will take place this fall

A new VRS website will become available in late spring
The truss show will be in May, place yet to be determined, names of trusses will be added and a new and improved format is being worked on.

Our Picnic is scheduled at the Marquardt Farm for 2017



Above: Rhododendron "Point Defiance"

Below: Rhododendron augustini "Green Eye"



Lapageria, the Chilean bellflower

Part 2. Growing it: the Agony and the Ecstasy

by Joe Harvey

1. **What is Lapageria?** A climbing vine, the national flower of Chile, with bell-shaped flowers to 10cm/4" long, in deep or pale pink, white or combinations of these.
2. **What are its good points?** The plant produces long-lasting and spectacular flowers. Established plants persist indefinitely and need little care.
3. **What are its bad points?** Plants are difficult to establish, slow to start flowering and the lower growth looks untidy, like a packrat's nest.
4. **Where to site it?** Preliminary ideas seem to indicate that it performs best on a north or eastern wall. They do not like hot midday sun. The lower part is best shaded by shrubs or a screen.
5. **How hardy is it?** Officially, it is Zone 9: light frost only. So not hardy in Victoria? Not true! Once settled in, plants take week-long freezing events such as happen some winters during events of outflow winds blowing from the Rockies.
6. **What soil?** Seemingly, it is not fussy but the soil should be loose and deep because the plant will develop a large rootball. I might suggest digging in a large bucket of Perlite. Peat? Probably not, but they do like fertiliser.
7. **How to plant it.** Place the plant in a deep hollow in the soil because the base keeps on producing roots and shoots. Soil can then be added to cover up the exposed roots.
8. **Quirks?** Soft young shoots are regularly produced and at the least upset, the tip of the shoot dries up. Quite why may be obscure: a sunbeam, the wind, you didn't smile at it that morning? Who knows! Don't fret. I think they do it to annoy.



9. **Water?** Yes. They do not like drying out when young. Older plants with deeper roots become resilient.
10. **Ecology.** They are rambling vines growing through bushes and on trees. The tubular flowers are hummingbird pollinated, probably by species with longer beaks than those in Victoria.
11. **The flowers.** Waxy textured and of a solid substance. This gives them a long life: about 3 weeks in summer and much longer in winter in the absence of freezing. The latter reduces them to mush but unopened ones continue to develop. The flowering season is principally summer to winter and in mild winters, they will continue to flower into spring.
12. **The Secret.** Lapageria is a woody lily with no bulb – a strange beast indeed. It is no longer placed in the lily family but hived off into a small southern hemisphere family Philesiaceae. The question arises, how does it store energy? My hunch is that the massive rootball is what keeps the system running. This would account for the ironclad hardness

that develops as a plant matures. This is not a proof, just a feeling. There is still a lot to learn about their biology.

13. **If you get one.** Keep it in a pot for a few years, giving it fresh soil and a larger pot every year or two. Stand the plant outside from spring to fall against a north wall and protect from frost in the winter.

14. **Adoption.** This article is stimulated by the realisation that there will be several dozen Lapageria seedlings available over the next few years. We encourage you to join the Lapageria Adoption Group. This is an Ugly Duckling plant. No one will notice it when it is young - when it flowers everyone will admire it.

Part 3 will be a biography of what was for many years the most northerly outdoor Lapageria in North America and the sole outdoor specimen in Canada. This in Victoria British Columbia!





Photography Evening

November 7, 2016

1. Digital Entries

Email your digital photos to Calvin at:

cparsons937@gmail.com

Calvin will prepare a PowerPoint presentation with all entries.

2. Email instructions


On the subject line, please enter the category the photo is intended for and the name of the rhododendron or plant or scene.

3. Categories

1. Single Rhododendron Truss
2. Whole Rhododendron Plant
3. Foliage Rhododendron
4. Companion Plant
5. Garden Scene
6. Creative/Artistic photos altered by technology

NOTE: Please enter only two photos per category. Deadline for digital photos is November 1, 2016

Upcoming Events

2016	Event	Place
Sep 19 7:30	Propagation Group Meeting call Ken Webb 250-744-174	TBA
Sept 29- Oct 2	34th Annual Western Regional Rhododendron Conference For the Love of Rhododendrons... and Other Good Friends... Canadians have a special registration of only \$35 due to the exchange rate	Newport, Oregon
Oct 3 7:30	General Meeting The Couvelier Pavilion	Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road
Oct 17 7:30	Propagation Group Meeting call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	TBA
Nov 1	Photos Due Final Day to submit photos for Photography Night November 7 General Meeting 	
Nov 7 7:30	General Meeting - Photography Night The Couvelier Pavilion	Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road
Nov 21 7:30	Propagation Group Meeting call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	TBA
Dec 5 6:30	Potluck Dinner The Couvelier Pavilion	Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road
Jan 2 7:30	General Meeting The Couvelier Pavilion	Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road
Jan 16 7:30	Propagation Group Meeting call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	TBA
Feb 6 7:30	General Meeting The Couvelier Pavilion	Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road
Feb 20 7:30	Propagation Group Meeting call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	TBA
Mar 6 7:30	General Meeting The Couvelier Pavilion	Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road
Mar 20 7:30	Propagation Group Meeting call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	TBA
Apr 3 7:30	General Meeting The Couvelier Pavilion	Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road
Apr 17 7:30	Propagation Group Meeting call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	TBA
Apr 23 10-2	Mount Arrowsmith Chapter Show and Plant Sale Contact Ray Walker, 250-228-8683	Parksville Curling Club 193 Island Highway east Parksville, BC
Apr 27-30	ARS Annual Convention	Eureka, CA
Apr 30 10-2	Cowichan Valley Chapter Plant Sale Several rhodo growers, companion plants, potter, garden furniture Contact Carrie Nelson, carrieonupthemountain@gmail.com	Cowichan Exhibition Grounds, Main Hall at corner of Mays Rd & Island Hwy, Duncan, BC
May 1 7:30	General Meeting The Couvelier Pavilion	Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road
May 1 10-3	Nanaimo Chapter Spring Show and Plant Sale	Beban Park, 2300 Bowen Rd Nanaimo, BC
May 15 7:30	Propagation Group Meeting call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	TBA
Jun 25 Noon	Sunday BBQ Location: -TBA	TBA
Sept 4 7:30	General Meeting The Couvelier Pavilion	Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road
Sept 18 7:30	Propagation Group Meeting Call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	TBA
Oct 2 7:30	General Meeting The Couvelier Pavilion	Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road
Oct 16 7:30	Propagation Group Meeting Call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	TBA
Nov 6 7:30	General Meeting – Photography Night The Couvelier Pavilion	Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road
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Dec 4 7:30	Potluck Dinner The Couvelier Pavilion	Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road