



The Victoria Rhododendron Society Newsletter

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

April 2017

tkmcmillan@telus.net

Thirty-Seventh Year of Publication

<http://victoriarhodo.ca>

MEETING 7:30

MONDAY, April 3, 2017

Couvelier Pavilion at the HCP Gardens

505 Quayle Road, VICTORIA, B. C.

Doors Open 7:00

**Interactive Session with all Members &
Annual General Meeting**

EVERYTHING YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT RHODODENDRONS BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK

This will be the topic for our April meeting. There is much accumulated knowledge about the genus rhododendron amongst members of our group. The April meeting will be about this knowledge. There will be a series of questions presented and each person will be able to contribute to this roundtable of discussion. If you have a particular question and are seeking an answer, please send your question or topic to any member of the board.

Brenda Macdonald and Norma Senn will start the meeting with a short "show and tell" session on assembling a small water feature using solar powered water fountains.

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REFRESHMENTS

for the next meeting to be provided by:

Norm Thomas

Katherine & Robert
Thompson

Michael Tripp

Carol & Harold
Turnham

Peter Vaartnou

Evert & Audrey
Van Eerden

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 with the cleanup is really appreciated.

Lug your own mug.



VICTORIA RHODODENDRON SOCIETY BOARD

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Editor's Notes



by Theresa McMillan

"The Changing Gardening World"

Presenter - Bernie Dinter

The Dinter Nursery near Whippletree Junction in Duncan has been in business for many years. It has been a small, family owned center since the 1970s.

Through the years Bernie Dinter has noticed many changes. In the 1970s, pesticides were heavily used for garden problems but in the years since then, they have gone out of favor. Common garden styles were west coast suburban (lawn, shrubs along the front of the house, still seen throughout Victoria) and English cottage gardens with little lawn, but masses of flowering trees in spring, and flower beds through spring to fall. And (in contrast to now) there were few deer to be seen.

Through the years, many of the small, family centered nurseries have gone out of business, to be replaced by big box garden centers, such as Lowe's in Nanaimo. or other stores as a sideline, such as Costco or Canadian Tire. By using automation and getting by with very low margins, these centers can afford to stay in business. Another profitable venture are "branded" plants, which can be "flavour of the minute" and don't perform well over time.

A new and growing group of gardeners, the "millennials", are very aware of the environment. They know about "food miles" and are interested in organic (no GMOs) vegetable growing in their own back yards. And so rainwater collection, composting and beneficial insects like mason bees are of interest. Monocultures such as lawns, less so.

Modern garden centers no longer sell invasive

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plants such as English Ivy. They have found that "fairy gardening" using tiny figures and plants is not just a fad. To be successful, they must know a great deal about plants, be able to effectively advise their customers, and know the plants that work in their areas.

Bernie Dinter's talk was very well received by our members. We are all interested in gardens and have noticed changes over the years but they have not been so well explained. Bernie's talk received a standing ovation.

Remember the **20th** of each month to share any pictures or experiences in the VRS newsletter. Please send to:

Theresa McMillan tkmcmillan@telus.net or
Linda Gilmore gilmore2080@gmail.com

Thank you.



Ginger



**Beer Bottles
Urgently Needed**



Over the past many years, our green ginger beer bottles have been disappearing.

If you have any at your home, **PLEASE bring them to the April meeting,** as we need them for our Truss Show in May.





NOTES FROM THE BOARD

MARCH 2017

by Lois Blackmore

Membership, minutes and treasurer's report were adopted as presented.

All forays into the communities by the VRS will be known as "The Community Gardens Project". These include Gordon Head, Mary Winspear Centre and City of Langford.

Ian Duncan reported that the HCP is open to having VRS become further involved in working together. This project is about having an area for the VRS to grow on, store and do research on growing rhododendrons. It is currently a long-term project as costs of fencing, irrigation and insurance need to be explored and approved by the board. Ian has taken on this project, reporting to the board when information becomes available.



Amber Honey
by Jim Barlup

We now have 61 large and mature Barlup hybrids in the compound at the Marquardt Farm. These will be stock plants for the club propagators.

[See or click here for article on page 8](#)

Several suggestions for the 2017/2018 speakers include: Ken Webb for a propagating workshop, Doug Justice on rhododendron taxonomy, Brian White from Royal Roads and Jeff de Jong on deer-proof companion plants for rhododendrons (is there such a thing?). If any VRS member has any suggestions for topics or speakers, please talk to any member of the board.

Our plant sale will be April 14 from 10 am – 2 pm for VRS members and guests.

Public plant sale is April 15 and 16 from 10 am to 2 pm. Volunteers are needed and will be contacted by telephone or email as to availability to help.

The public truss show will be at the Mary Winspear Centre on May 5-7. Set-up will be Friday afternoon starting at 12 noon. Take-down will be Sunday afternoon, again starting at noon. Members will bring their trusses to the Centre and place them in the colourful vases we purchased last year. Please have a name tag ready to be placed under each vase. Again, volunteers are needed.

PLEASE NOTE OUR CHANGE OF DATE FOR THE MEMBER TRUSS SHOW. The board decided to make this change as the original date conflicts with the ARS Convention in Eureka. We have moved the meeting to the second Monday in May. That date is May 8. We continue to search for the green bottles that have been a traditional part of this show. If you have any in storage, please bring them to the April meeting.

We missed our Annual General Meeting, usually held in March of every year. This will be held at our April meeting instead. There will be several

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new board members needed for the 2017-2018 year. If you are interested in becoming a member of the board, we welcome new faces and new ideas. Please let Lois know if you would like to serve.

We approached the City of Langford about creating a rhododendron park within the city limits. They have suggested a large treed area close to Belmont School and City Center Recreational Activities. As well, they are approaching the Bear Mountain Development Company to see if such a park could be included in their plans as development occurs. At this time, they are mostly concerned about the care of the rhododendrons currently in place in city boulevards. We suggested they contact Jacq Bradbury as the person to talk to about this matter. Sometime after the rush of rhododendron season wanes, a group will look at the suggested site to see if this is a feasible site for such a park.

Ken reported that the 2019 ARS Fall Conference will be held in the Parksville area. Our propagating group will supply the table favors for this event.

Please note that the picnic date for 2017 is earlier than usual. The Victoria Hardy Plant Group Study Weekend is on at the Mary Winspear Centre on the same date as the picnic. As a result, our picnic is re-scheduled for June 18 at the Marquardt Farm.

The BC provincial government is requiring all Societies to update their constitutions to comply with the new Societies Act, passed on November 28, 2016. Bill and Linda will work together on this project. We have until sometime in 2018.

Ian will be contacting members and setting up garden tours for the Spring of 2017. If you wish to open your garden for this event, please contact Ian.



Lectures

University of Victoria



**University
of Victoria**

The Millennial Gardener – Tuesday April 4, 6:30-8:30pm

at UVic

With a new generation comes a new attitude towards gardening that will affect the world of horticulture. Join instructor and gardening expert Jeff de Jong for this interesting session.

Registration and information: <https://continuingstudies.uvic.ca/science-and-ecological-restoration/courses/the-millennial-gardener>

Why Seaweeds Are Better Than Salmon – Thursday April 6, 7-9pm at UVic

Learn about the nutritional benefits of seaweed for the environment and for us humans too! You will even get some fun recipes for cooking with local seaweeds.

Registration and information: <https://continuingstudies.uvic.ca/science-and-ecological-restoration/courses/why-seaweeds-are-better-than-salmon>

Lapageria, Chilean Bellflower

#6 Background: A Conquistador, a Captain and a Guest

by Joe Harvey

The Conquistador

Pedro de Valdivia was the Spanish governor of



Chile when an excellent navigable river was named for him and in 1554, a fort was established. He named the settlement in honour of the Virgin Mary - Santa Maria la Blanca de Valdivia - conveniently abbreviated Valdivia.

Valdivia is located 15km inland where three tributaries join. The surrounding Valdivian rainforest had stands of giant trees, the size of redwoods, that the Mapuche called 'alerce'; the soil was fertile and the Spanish hoped to find gold. The Spanish mistakenly called the Mapuche, 'Araucanos' and from that we get the name of the sharp-spined monkey puzzle, *Araucaria araucana* which occurs on hills further inland. German settlers arrived from 1840, exploiting the abundant timber in a manner mirrored by what happened to the forest of British Columbia.

Two disasters reduced the thriving port: in 1911 the Panama Canal opened, reducing ship visits; in 1960 a 9.5 earthquake, the largest recorded, caused great damage. Today there are plantations of *Eucalyptus* for pulp and Douglas fir and Monterey pine for lumber. The town is an excellent tourist centre with summer festivals in January and February.

The Captain

When my late Uncle John's antique collection was sold, to everyone's surprise, the item which brought the highest bid was the old hallway barometer, made in London to Captain Fitzroy's pattern.

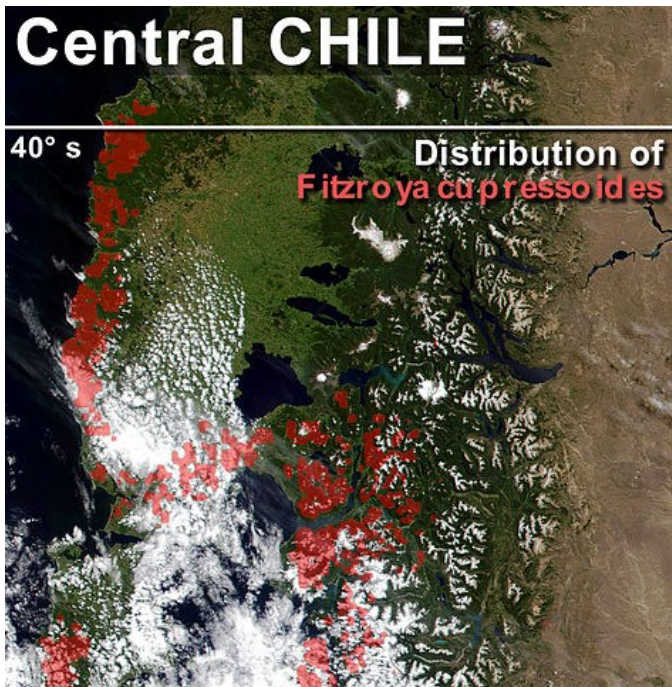
Robert Fitzroy, 1805-65, is a neglected character. A skilled navigator, he showed how small changes in atmospheric pressure could be used to predict storms. At the time this was crazy talk. Fitzroy was the first to use the word 'forecast' for weather predictions and became the world's first meteorologist, a term he invented.



The British Empire was at heart a trading organisation and needed accurate charts for its ships to sail around the world, sell goods and get raw materials. The Admiralty chose Fitzroy to take a sturdy, well-equipped ship, the *Beagle*, to the 'Southern Cone', the south part of South America, to survey in detail the coastline and inlets. These measurements were to be used to produce charts. The work is slow and tedious: the ship anchors for a week or more while longboats use line and lead to sound channels and plot shoals. The trip took five years. The resulting charts were in use until a few years ago.

To honour Fitzroy alerce, the signature tree of the Valdivian rainforest, was given the name *Fitzroya cupressoides* with the latter signifying that the small, scale-like leaves resemble those of cypress, the ending *-oides* (oh-ee-daze), means 'resembling'. *Fitzroya* grows well in Victoria, BC and I saw a small specimen in the Tofino Botanical Gardens where the rainforest climate should be ideal for it.

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The Guest

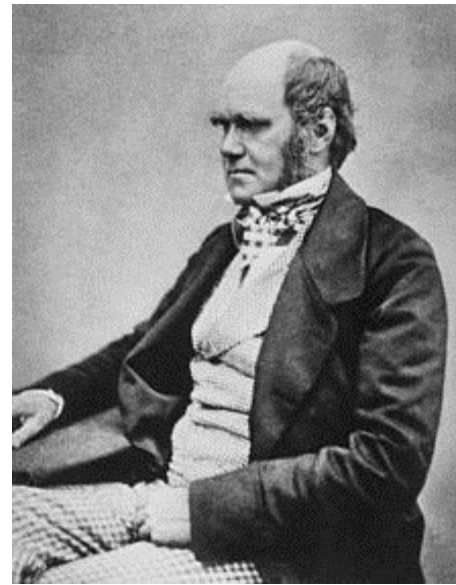
Problem teenagers are not new. In the 1820's a physician in England had two sons: one was studious and completing his medical studies at Edinburgh; the younger son was struggling at school – didn't like his teachers! The solution was to pack off the youngster, age 16, to Edinburgh to share digs with his brother and hope that the more serious learning atmosphere would settle him down. Result? A disaster. He fell in with a bunch of well-off toffs who enjoyed drinking and country parties to shoot game. His despairing father finally enrolled the son in Cambridge to study classics and divinity. A future as a vicar in a comfortable parish was proposed.

About this time Captain Fitzroy made it known that he was prepared to share his cabin with a gentleman guest, i.e. no salary, and that this guest would be given the honorific 'ship's naturalist'. The son, now 22, heard of this and was keen to go; he could shoot birds in South America. The father was mightily relieved. How relieved? Here is an extract from a letter he wrote to Fitzroy, "What a glorious day the 4th of November", (the day in 1831 set for the ship to sail), "will be to me, my second life will then commence, and it will be as a birthday for the rest of my life". Yikes!

So did our troubled teenager "find himself"? You bet. This was Charles Darwin who in 1858 with Alfred Russel Wallace jointly proposed the Theory

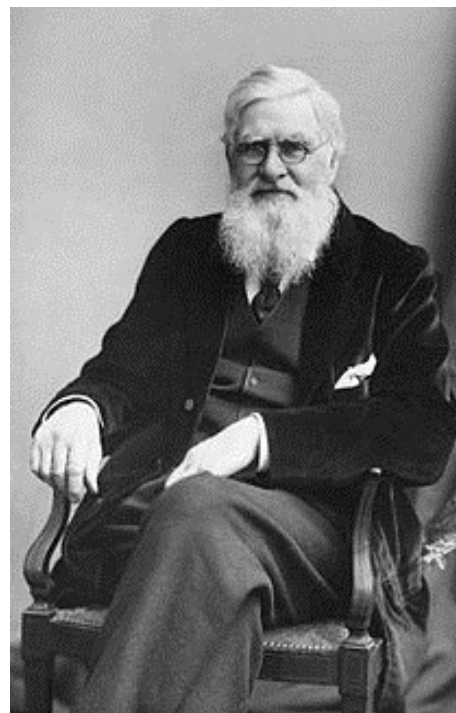
of Evolution at the Linnean Society of London in Burlington House. Fitzroy, a deeply conservative Christian, was devastated. He never forgave Darwin.

Charles Darwin



12 February 1809 – 19 April 1882
Darwin, c. 1854 when he was working towards publication of *On the Origin of Species*

Alfred Russel Wallace



(8 January 1823 – 7 November 1913)
[from Wikipedia](#)

LEGACY RHODODENDRONS COME TO CANADA ...A STORY EXTRAORDINAIRE

by Lois Blackmore

On the weekend of March 12-13, several members of the VRS arrived in Bellevue, WA for a special event. It was the beginning of a new chapter in our history.

This story began in 2003, Olympia, WA with the purchase of a rhododendron called "Windsong". This small plant, really just a one-year cutting, was brought to Victoria and planted in the Blackmore garden. After four to five years, a most beautiful yellow truss emerged from this quite lovely plant. At the same time, several other small cuttings were also purchased. By coincidence, all these rhododendrons were hybridized by the same person. They all turned out to be garden sized plants, with lovely structure and foliage.



Windsong

Who was this person, this hybridizer of these quite lovely plants?



Lois & Roy Blackmore and Jim Barlup

Jim Barlup. The quest to collect more of these rhododendrons began. In the following years, several more plants were purchased and planted in the Blackmore garden. This meant Roy and Lois travelling to the US, finding the plants, getting a phyto certificate and bringing them into Canada. A total of 33 Barlup hybrids were in their garden in 2010.

It is now 2011. Lloyd and Linda Gilmore said they were going to visit the Jim Barlup garden after the Vancouver, WA spring convention. Tagging along, we met Jim for the first time. A friendship began immediately. As the friendship grew, a conversation began about the Victoria Propagating group, and how

successful Ken and Madeleine Webb were at starting new rhododendrons from cuttings. This friendship blossomed as well, as several hundred cuttings came to Canada via the Webbs. Conversations at the propagating meetings began, and Tony and Carolyn Marquardt became involved. The Marquardts have a large property and offered to care for some of the cuttings after they were rooted. This now has expanded to a large hoop house being erected on their property and a wonderful storage area for large plants.



Tony & Carolyn Marquardt



Roy Blackmore and Jim Barlup

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Calvin Parsons

This cross border friendship continued. More cuttings to Canada. More cuttings to root. More plants to sell. How do we let the rhododendron world know about these beautiful plants? Another cross border connection was made. Calvin Parsons, our computer expert, a knower of all things "techy", suggested a web site. He too, stored and maintained many of the cuttings as they continued to grow. A website was in order.



Johanna and Moe Massa

How do we save these plants and protect the ones we have already collected? Now the Massas became a part of the story. Moe and Johanna received a rooted plant of each of the Barlup hybrids that Ken and Madeleine rooted. This move ensured we would have a copy of each Barlup hybrid.

In Bellevue, WA, Jim and Judy Barlup wanted less responsibility as they grew older, and much discussion ensued as to what should happen to the large number of plants that Jim no longer used in his breeding program. Together, they made the decision that the Victoria Rhododendron Society would become the receivers of such a gift to the rhododendron world. Now, we return to the beginning of the story.



Jim Barlup getting plants ready to transport to Canada



Roy Blackmore and Ken Webb ready to return home with a truckload of Jim Barlup rhododendrons.

As of Monday, March 13, the Victoria Rhododendron Society is the proud owner of 61 large Barlup hybrids. These special plants will be used as a source of cuttings and increase the number of Barlup hybrids that will only be available in Canada through the Victoria Rhododendron Society.

And, our story continues.





Denman Island Home and Garden Tour June 10-11, 2017

Tickets are now on sale for this enchanting Tour, deemed by the Globe & Mail "one of Canada's top six horticultural events." Every two years this idyllic island throws open its garden gates, inviting the public for a rare up-close look at the creativity, skill and passion Denman residents pour into their properties.

This year's tour will be particularly compelling to anyone interested in sustainability and permaculture. Highlights include a home built with reclaimed railroad timbers and telegraph poles, an example of a "tiny home", and stunning examples of contemporary family farms. Bloom lovers will not be disappointed, either - roses, lilies, and a whole host of other blossoms will be found in abundance.

This weekend event provides an unforgettable experience for lovers of gardens, homes and rural charm. Many people return year after year, and are never disappointed. Join them! Come for a day trip, or book into a cozy B&B and stay for the weekend.

Early bird tickets are \$18, and can be purchased online at <http://www.denman-conservancy.org/home-and-garden-tour/>. Facebook: www.facebook.com/DenmanIslandHomeAndGardenTour

VRS 2017 Calendar



www.victoriarhodo.ca



Key to the Symbols

General Meetings
Gardens at HCP
505 Quayle Road
Victoria BC V9E 2L7



Propagation Group

Meetings every 2 months
(contact Ken Webb
to be added to the email list)



ARS Convention
April 27 - 30

Activities

Plant sale at Marquandts
April 14-15 2017



Truss Show, Mary Winspear
May 5-7, 2017



Summer Picnic
See May Newsletter for
details

January

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SUMMER

BREAK

September

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31						

Upcoming Events

2017	Event	Place
Apr 3 7:30	General Meeting and AGM - The Couvelier Pavilion Interactive Session with all Members	Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road
Apr 7-8	Rhododendron Species Symposium 2017 with Hartwig Schepker Register online Evergreen Best Western Inn & Suites	Rhodo Species Botanical Gard 2525 S 336 th St Federal Way, WA
Apr 14-16 10-2	Plant Sale at Marquardts Farm Members Only - Friday, April 14	4640 Cordova Bay Road Victoria
Apr 17 7:30	Propagation Group Meeting - come early to Playfair Park call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	Playfair Park, off Rock St Victoria
Apr 23 10-2	Mount Arrowsmith Chapter Show and Plant Sale Contact Ray Walker, 250-228-8683	Parksville Curling Club 193 Island Hwy E., Parksville
Apr 27-30	ARS Annual Convention Early booking is recommended. Red Lion Hotel reservations 1-800-733-5466	Eureka, CA
Apr 29 10-2	Cowichan Valley Chapter Plant Sale Several rhodo growers, companion plants, garden furniture Contact Carrie Nelson, carrieonupthemountain@gmail.com	Cowichan Exhibit. Grounds Main Hall, Mays Rd & Island Hwy Duncan, BC
May 1 10-3	Nanaimo Chapter Spring Show and Plant Sale	Beban Park 2300 Bowen Rd, Nanaimo, BC
May 5-7	Truss Show – Mary Winspear Centre	Mary Winspear Centre 2243 Beacon Ave, Sidney, BC
May 8 7:30	Truss Show - The Couvelier Pavilion	Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road
May 15 7:30	Propagation Group Meeting call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	TBA
Jun 10-11 7:30	Denman Island Home and Garden Tour Early bird tickets http://www.denman-conservancy.org/home-and-garden-tour/	Denman Island
Jun 18 Noon	Sunday BBQ at Marquardts Farm	4640 Cordova Bay Road Victoria
Jun 19 7:30	Propagation Group Meeting Call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	TBA
Jun 23-25	Flourish – Victoria Hardy Plant Group Study Weekend	Mary Winspear Centre Sidney, BC
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 - The Couvelier Pavilion	Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road
Nov 20 7:30	Propagation Group Meeting Call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	TBA
Dec 4 6:30	Christmas Potluck Dinner - The Couvelier Pavilion	Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road
2018 ~May 7-30	ARS Convention - North America meets Europe - May 20-26 http://arsstore.org/ARS2018/ With optional Pre and Post-Tours ranging from ~ May 7 – May 30	Denmark, Finland, Germany, Netherlands and Sweden