



The Victoria Rhododendron Society *Newsletter*

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June 2017

tkmcmillan@telus.net

Thirty-Seventh Year of Publication

<http://victoriarhodo.ca>

VRS PICNIC

12 P.M. Sunday, June 18, 2017

Marquardt's Farm
4640 Cordova Bay Road

VRS PICNIC

The picnic lunch will be held at **noon** at the Marquardt's Farm at 4640 Cordova Bay Road. Parking will be at the bottom barn area. For convenience, some guests, supplies and items may be dropped off at the house, but please park in the designated area.

Please wrap your savory, salad or dessert with labels of contents, such as eggs, dairy, nuts or gluten for those with allergies.

Grilled salmon lunch will be served about **1 p.m.** Fruit punch (thanks to Heather), tea and coffee will be provided.

Remember to bring your own cutlery, plates, cups and chairs **AND** plants for the auction.

Members:

A-M Savory

N-Z Sweet



**Seriously, we need additional cooks.
Please see Calvin or Bill Gordon.**



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Editor's Notes

by Theresa McMillan, Editor

Report on May 8 Members' Truss Show

Monday, May 8, was a fine day, good for selecting trusses from our gardens for the Truss Show at the Couvelier Pavilion at the HCP. We have had a cool wet spring, allowing flowers to last for a long time.

Ian Duncan made sure the Rhododendron Garden was open to visitors by 6, an hour earlier than the meeting. Several members visited it and it was looking very good.

Soon we could hear the clanking of bottles filled with masses of rhodos and footsteps of people carrying a few potted plants with greenery swaying above them. The meeting room was full of tables set up with black tablecloths and ruffled panels below them, made a few years ago for the tables at Cadboro United Church where we had many shows and sales.

There was a pile of labels like "pink truss" from the Newsletter all neatly cut out and ready to be put on the tables. The labels were placed under the flowers in green ginger beer bottles or colourful vases.

Once the rhodos and companion plants were all set out and properly displayed, members were given baggies filled with coloured beads and instructed to use one (or more) bead to signify which truss or plant was the best in each group (pink, red, white and so on, companion plant and specialties).

In the next step, volunteers counted the beads and brought the most popular choices to a table at the front of the room. They were placed in front of the prizes (not trophies), bottles of wine and in the case of "This Bud's for You", a case of Budweiser Beer.

About this time we were treated to coffee, tea and our choice of a Canadian treat, Tim Horton's Tim Bits (mini donuts). It was a great evening decorated by hundreds of rhododendron blooms inside and outside in our Garden.

Truss show pictures on page 3, courtesy of **Nadine Minckler**; thank you.

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NOTES FROM THE BOARD

May 11, 2017



- The minutes, treasurer's report and membership report were adopted as presented.
- Calvin reported that the Township of Sidney has assumed the care for the rhododendron garden at the Mary Winspear Centre. He met with the maintenance supervisor and was assured that the care for the garden will be taken over by the township. They will soon be moving the roses, which will allow for further planting. A complete watering system will soon be completed, allowing for further planting for the club. Calvin will also meet with the staff to show how to prune the plants. Our only commitment will be to plant new rhododendrons as the new plans proceed.
- The Mary Winspear Centre Truss Show was much smaller than 2016. A discussion was held as to the viability of repeating this public show for 2018. The general opinion was that we need to continue with a public display as part of our stated mission to promote and educate the public about the genus rhododendron. It was felt that the display may have been limited because of the late blooming season, the fact that the member truss show was on the Monday following the public display and members were saving their best trusses for our member truss show.
- Our member truss show was discussed as to how this event should be organized and held. Some suggested that a competitive show could be held every two to three years and return to the awarding of the trophies. Another suggestion was that we generate two categories for entry, novice and past winners. A third suggestion is that we move the date to an earlier time. The only formal feedback received was that we continue with the membership taking an active part in the voting in each category. Further details for 2018 will be forthcoming.
- The speakers for the autumn months are as follows:
- September Lois Blackmore, "The Birds and the Bees" ... the Art, Research and Science of Hybridizing...based on the 40 years of hybridizing by Jim Barlup
- October Jeff De Jong, "A Peek into 2018...America Meets Europe:" the gardens that are part of the Netherlands section of the 2018 ARS Convention
- November Sean Rafferty, "The Lure of Species Rhododendrons". Sean is currently the president of the Species Foundation in Federal Way. He and his wife Brenda have taken many forays into the Himalayas on plant hunting trips.
- Club supplies seem to have wandered off to various locations during the past many years. If you have anything belonging to the VRS, including trophies, show supplies, signs, etc. please contact Ian Duncan at duncani@telus.net or 250-479-0820.
- We are looking for volunteer "foster parents" for our new cuttings after they root. This would mean a member that would be willing to care for 10 to 20 baby plants that have been recently rooted for a sea-

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son or two as they grow into saleable plants. Your task would be to water and add fertilizer for at least one season. If you are willing to be a “foster plant parent”, please contact Ken and Madeleine Webb.

- Repotting of smaller plants into larger containers will soon take place at the Marquardt Farm. Watch for a notice from Calvin.
- As suggested by Kenneth Cox at the Sidney convention, the earthquake in Nepal has been devastating and the ARS donate to a fund to help with recovery to that area. Since that time, a school has been built for children in a certain area. Several chapters on Vancouver Island have donated funds to that project. They are now requiring funding for teachers. As a Victoria chapter, we would like to donate to this fund. A motion will be called for this at our picnic on June 18. The amount of this donation will be determined from information gathered from other chapters in District One.
- We are searching for two more experienced BBQ Chefs for our upcoming picnic at the Marquardt Farm on Sunday, June 18. Roy and Archie are taking the year off. Calvin and Bill have joined the “Epicurious Group” and are looking for another two volunteers to help with this task. If you are a “chef in training” or want to help with this job, please contact Calvin or Bill Gordon.



Karen & Burns Morrison's Open Garden

April 20, 2017



**Keiko & William Alkire's Open Garden
May 18, 2017**



**Carol & Bill Dancer's Open Garden
May 18, 2017**



Community Rhododendron Gardens – Update

by Calvin Parsons

Milner Gardens and Woodlands Rhododendron Species Garden

In 2014, Victoria Rhododendron Society donated \$7,000 to a District #1 fund to start the process of building a rhododendron species garden at Milner Gardens and Woodland. District #1 ARS chapters donated as well to get the fund up to \$20,000. These funds were matched by Vancouver Island University. Since that time much planning and work has been achieved.

Teams of folks have donated their time to design the garden, get the land cleared and start the re-planting of the area. Planning of where to put the species rhodos and where in the garden they would be grouped has been ongoing and still continues. The layout of the garden will follow six geographical regions with two categories of Milner 'roots' and endangered species added. 29 species are listed as vulnerable and 17 of these rhodos have already been purchased. 158 species rhodos have been identified for the garden with 106 already purchased or donated. Larger species will be planted in the fall to ensure best chance of survival. Another group has identified companion plants to accompany the rhodos and will be purchased at a later date.

As the recent photos show (taken April 12, 2017) construction of the entrance to the garden is well under way. This entrance, cut through the hedge, is at the end of the pond by the small gift shop.



Work has begun to install the main irrigation lines for the garden, as well as conduit for electrical and communication purposes (follow the flags in the second photo). New soil will be purchased, a 3-1 combination of sand and fish compost with a top dressing of wood chips, before the planting of rhodos.



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Chapters close to Milner Gardens have been providing volunteer help to assist the staff with implementing these plans.



Horticultural Centre of the Pacific, Gardens at Glendale

VicRS maintains the Rhododendron Garden with volunteers every Wednesday morning. If you are bored with your retired life, consider joining our enthusiastic volunteers from 9 am to noon on Wednesdays. You will be rewarded with coffee and a cookie as well as informative conversation with other volunteers. Deadheading season is fast approaching so extra volunteers would be appreciated.



Henderson Recreation Centre, Oak Bay.

VicRS provides consultation services to Oak Bay for planting rhodos throughout Oak Bay. Oak Bay is a big purchaser at our annual rhodo sales.

Mary Winspear Centre

VicRS has donated approximately 43 rhodos in establishing a memorial rhodo garden after our very successful convention in 2015. Maintenance of the MWC gardens has recently been transferred to the Township of Sidney. The workers are in the process of removing the remaining rose bushes and reconnecting the sprinkler system to ensure our rhodos are watered efficiently this summer. We hope to do a fall planting this year.



City of Langford

We are in preliminary talks with Langford regarding the establishment of a rhododendron park.

RHODODENDRONS AND DROUGHT

In the Spring 2017 Journal of the American Rhododendron Society Newsletter, there is an article on page 68 by **Linda Derkach**, President of Mount Arrowsmith Chapter, "Rhododendrons and Drought: Some Things You Can Do" that is worth reading for ALL our members. Although this has been a cool damp spring, the next year or two could be quite different. The old hazard of a hot dry summer, many people not physically strong enough to hand water their rhododendrons, or not able to pay for the necessary water could lead to the sad sight of many stressed or dying rhododendrons around Victoria and the Island. Linda's article is full of practical suggestions and even pictures of four particularly drought-resistant rhodies.



The Spring Sale

A spectacular new beginning for the VRS

For the first time ever, the VRS sold only rhododendrons that had been propagated and grown by club members.

VANCOUVER ISLAND ROCK AND ALPINE
GARDEN SOCIETY PRESENTS

JÍŘÍ PAPOUŠEK

DIVERSITY OF METHODS OF GROWING ALPINES
IN THE CZECH GARDEN



Dionysia bryoides, Hana Lake

Jiří Papoušek, aka the Alpine Parrot, is a world-renowned rock gardener and active member of the Czech Rock Garden Society. He is an enthusiastic grower of cushion plants, dwarf conifers and Daphnes. He has over 30 years of experience growing and exhibiting alpine in Prague rock garden shows and is a member of the International Czech Rock Garden Conference Committee. Come hear Jiří share his knowledge on this fascinating subject. This is an outdoor function so dress accordingly.

Tuesday, June 13, 7pm-9pm
840 Sayward Rd. Victoria BC
Admission by donation

Visit our website @ www.virags.ca

Or find us on facebook @ vancouver island rock and alpine garden society

Upcoming Events

2017	Event	Place
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 Marquardt's 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 "The Birds and the Bees" with Lois Blackmore	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 "A Peek into 2018" with Jeff de Jong	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 "Species Rhododendrons" with Sean Rafferty	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	2018	2018
Jan 8 7:30	General Meeting - The Couvelier Pavilion	Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road
Jan 22 7:30	Propagation Group Meeting Call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	TBA
Feb 5 7:30	General Meeting - The Couvelier Pavilion	Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road
Feb 19 7:30	Propagation Group Meeting Call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	TBA
Mar 5 7:30	General Meeting - The Couvelier Pavilion	Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road
Mar 19 7:30	Propagation Group Meeting Call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	TBA
Apr 2 7:30	General Meeting - The Couvelier Pavilion	Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road
Apr 13-15 7:30	Plant Sale at Marquardt's Farm Members Only - Friday, April 13	4640 Cordova Bay Road Victoria
Apr 16 7:30	Propagation Group Meeting Call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	TBA
May 4-6	Truss Show See April Newsletter for details	Mary Winspear Centre Sidney, BC
May 7-30	ARS Convention - North America meets Europe - May 20-26 http://arsstore.org/ARS2018/ With optional Pre & Post-Tours ranging from ~ May 7 – May 30	Denmark, Finland, Germany, Netherlands and Sweden