



The Victoria Rhododendron Society Newsletter

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

March 2017

tkmcmillan@telus.net

Thirty-Seventh Year of Publication

<http://victoriarhodo.ca>

MEETING 7:30

MONDAY, March 6, 2017

Couvelier Pavilion at the HCP Gardens

505 Quayle Road, VICTORIA, B. C.

Doors Open 7:00

Speaker: Bernie Dinter

The Changing Gardening World

Bernie Dinter is a well-known nurseryman who operates Dinter Nurseries, just across from the Whipple Tree junction in Duncan. His knowledge of the gardening world is extensive. His topic this evening will focus on the changing gardening world and its impact on gardening in general. Gardeners of all types will find this most informative as they look into the future of our ever-changing world.

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REFRESHMENTS

for the next meeting to be provided by:

Janet Renouf

Steve Rhodes

Rhonda Rose

Ann & Mikkel Schau

Norma Senn

Frances & Dan Syroid

Please email Betty Gordon at

bbgordon@shaw.ca or (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 with
the cleanup is really appreciated.

Lug your own mug.



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Editor's Notes

The Winter of 2016-17

by Theresa McMillan

Our meeting on Monday, February 5th was cancelled because of all the snow. Besides, our speaker Bernie Dinter lives in Duncan on the other side of the Malahat, which is hazardous in winter conditions. Bernie's talk of 'The Changing World of Gardening' was rescheduled for the March 6th meeting. The timing could not be better as we are all experiencing these changes.

Wednesday, February 8th, as I am writing this, we are in the midst of another snowstorm, the last one I hope of this interminable winter. I heard this winter is the longest stretch of cold weather since 1990. I didn't notice the long-term effects of the long cold spell back then, as I was not really into gardening.

I DID notice the effect of winter during the infamous Blizzard of '96, which lasted days and was very destructive. I saw the weight of snow and freezing rain bending our young R. Loderi Venus, R. Bow Bells, R. Cinnabarinum and others. They required several clearings from the snow. That winter left thousands of downed and broken rhododendrons in Victoria's gardens.

This winter had five or more breakthroughs of Arctic air, instead of the usual one or two.



Snow decorated lilac and apple trees
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However, although unusually cold and snowy, it has not been as destructive as the winter of 1996.

This winter though had some real effects. The usual budding of the early blooming Indian plum has not happened. Winter blooming shrubs and trees in the colder areas of Victoria are not showing any colour. Even the Himalayan blackberry leaves are withered and brown along the highways.



Bamboo Squashed-looks like a big flower :)

In our garden in Colwood, we have snow-covered early snowdrops and crocuses. There are only two rhodos thinking of blooming, *R. dauricum* and *R. nobleanum* (though mostly frozen). I wonder how the spring will develop.

Vancouver Island is well known for its unique micro climes. Each of our gardens is unique. Seeing successes or what is happening in the VRS members' gardens this Spring, is a wonderful learning opportunity, shared in our Newsletter. Linda Gilmore and I would love to get your stories and pictures for the newsletter.

Please email your stories and pictures to Linda or myself ==> tkmcmillan@telus.net or gilmore2080@gmail.com

Please Return Containers



Jacq Bradbury would like to ask VRS members to please return the containers from the Christmas centrepieces. Please bring containers to our next meeting. Thank you.

Beer Bottles

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 March/April meetings, as we need them for our Truss Show in May.



Flower Arrangers Club



The Flower Arrangers Club meets at the Garth Homer Centre on the second Tuesday of each month.

The cost of a membership is \$40 annually. Members are able to purchase materials at 10% over wholesale cost and have access to an extensive library.





NOTES FROM THE BOARD FEBRUARY 2017

At our February board meeting:

- The regular reports of committees were discussed and adopted as read
- There has been no communication from the Mary Winspear Centre regarding further development of the rhododendron garden
- Because of weather related issues, the proposal regarding expansion of the VRS working at the HCP was postponed
- A proposal to expand the VRS footprint within the larger community was discussed and approved. We will approach the City of Langford council to discuss the idea of creating a new rhododendron park in the vicinity of Bear Mountain.
- Our annual sale will be held at the Marquardt Farm on the long weekend of the Easter holiday, April 14 -16 from 10 am. until 2 pm. Volunteers are needed
- Friday, April 14, the sale will be open to members only 10am. until 2 pm. Again, volunteers will be needed
- Our public truss and flower display will be held at the Mary Winspear Centre on the weekend of May 5-7, volunteers needed
- Our club truss show and member participating judging will be held at our May meeting on Monday, May 1
- Our picnic will be held at the Marquardt Farm on June 18
- As our propagating group continues to expand, we are exploring sites other than members' homes for our meetings

Lapageria, Chilean bellflower

Part 5: When a lily is not a lily

by Joe Harvey

The idea of 'lily'

Lapageria was classified in the lily family when it was discovered but is now in a very small southern hemisphere family, the Philesiaceae. Changes like this annoy gardeners. Why does it happen and what is a lily?



Philesia magellanica by [Jason Hollinger](#)

As it happens, we understand the concept 'lily' probably better than any other plant. In the 1960's Linda and I were camping in what was then Yugoslavia, in the Macedonian region, when we came across an active archaeological dig of a Roman or Greek villa with a freshly exposed mosaic floor. Conspicuous was a several foot long image of a beautiful white-flowered lily, the Madonna lily, a native of the region.

Getting out my camera equipment, I was extending the tripod when a noise came from the far side of the dig. The archaeologist in charge was running

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full tilt at me, arms flailing, screaming in Greek or Macedonian, or whatever, that photography was forbidden. I hadn't realised until then that I had a complete understanding of the local language!



[Lilium candidum](#) by [Zachi Evenor](#)

Putting the Hasselblad away, I left with no photograph, but the incident served to sear the image of the lily into my memory.

That site was probably about 2000 years old, but near Knossos on Crete a Minoan representation of a white lily, now in the Heraklion museum, dates to about 1500BC.

Species Plantarum, Linnaeus

Fast forward to 1753 when Linnaeus published his catalogue of all then-known plants - Species Plantarum. His lily section starts with this same white lily. Now the ordinary adjective for white is *album*, but in the Middle Ages, this particular lily got connected to St Mary so it was named *Lilium candidum*, with the descriptor meaning shining or pure white. Linnaeus did not use plant 'families' to group his genera. He had a curious but simple numerical system called the Sexual System. What one did to locate a plant in his book was to count

the number of stamens (the males) in a flower, then the number of ovaries (the females) or divisions within the ovary. Lilies are 6-1. That is six stamens, one ovary. Look up the 6-1's in the book and you are in the lily section. Any kid could do this; it revolutionised botany, converting it from herbalism to science.

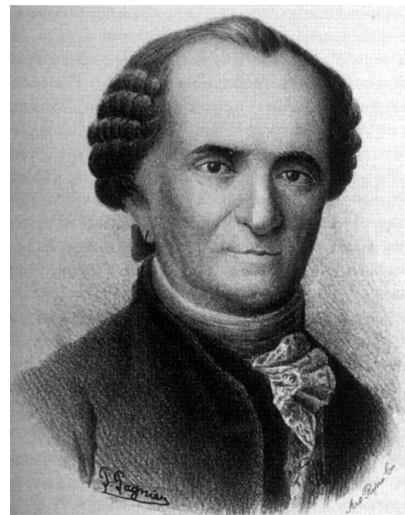
Families

Linnaeus's so called sexual system lasted for almost 100 years but it was too coarse and inexact for scientists. For instance, it makes no distinction between the edible and the poisonous lilies. These are easily distinguished because the edible ones have a 'superior' ovary (ovary above the petals, hence inside the flower), while the poisonous ones have an 'inferior' ovary (ovary below the petals making a bulge). Think tulip versus daffodil. Even my deer know this. Family names are coined by taking the first name of the group in the order in which they occur in Species Plantarum and adding the family ending -iaceae. Thus, the first lily listed happens to be the Madonna lily, *Lilium candidum*, and the family is Liliaceae (lil-ee-ACE-ee-eye). The belladonna lily is a poisonous lily,

and its name *Amaryllis* gives us

Amaryllidaceae (am-ar-ill-id-ACE-ee eye). This was the initial split in the lily group but as knowledge

accumulated, other smaller families were proposed. Years before Lapageria



Philibert Commerçon

(18 November 1727 – 13 March 1773)

was discovered by the Spanish and named for Josephine Bonaparte, a sprawling shrub, common on the southern parts of Chile and Argentina had been discovered in the course of a French expedition and given a

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name for a curiously romantic reason – Ah, those French!

Captain Bougainville

Louis-Antoine de Bougainville was a seasoned French captain. For instance in 1759 he had kept the British fleet from reaching Montreal, but could not prevent the famous scramble up the cliff at Quebec – which resulted in Canada. Despite that, in 1766 he was selected by the French government to lead a 2-ship survey expedition to explore and circumnavigate the world. The ships were well equipped and included the naturalist Philbert Commercon.

Now a gentleman scientist of the time was expected to have an assistant/valet, and sure enough, a manservant came on board, but he was not a good mixer and stayed mostly in the cabin. It eventually turned out that the ‘manservant’ was in fact Commercon’s mistress in disguise. Her name was Jeanne Baret and she became the first woman to circumnavigate the globe.

Philesia

Plants and animals discovered on expeditions have to be described and given scientific names. The person naming an organism is allowed to exercise his or her imagination. A duty name

was to call a sprawling vine *Bougainvillea* to honour the captain. And Jeanne? Commercon picked the low shrub with beautiful pink, bell-shaped flowers for her. The Greek word for love is *philein* so the name *Philesia* (fi-LEE-zee-uh) was coined for her.

But which family did it belong to? Initially it was stuck into Liliaceae – 6 stamens: 1 ovary: this satisfies ordinary needs, but a woody evergreen shrub is hardly a lily, so it was placed into various small families, e.g. Smilacaceae (*Smilax*, sarsaparilla). Eventually it was realised that many plants and animals evolved in isolation for millions of years on the southern continent Gondwana (or Gondwanaland) which later split into the southern continents, and that these are distinct and require separate recognition. A new name was required for the strange southern ‘lilies’. There are only two species in this family: *Lapageria* and *Philesia* and since the latter was described first, it gets naming priority. Hence the new family Philesiaceae (fi-lee-zee-ACE-ee-eye). It is a lovely name.



Vancouver Island Rock and Alpine Garden Society Annual Spring Show March 17 & 18



Primula marginata

Cadboro Bay United Church
2625 Arbutus Road
Victoria BC

Enjoy the fabulous exhibits , displays,
door prizes, raffle, silent auction,
commercial plant sales, and tea.

Friday 1:00 pm - 8:00 pm
Saturday 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

2017 Special Display Feature:
'Sempervivum Spectacular!'

Admission by donation
Plant sale by Club members Saturday 11:00 am

Visit our website at www.virags.ca or find us on Facebook @ Vancouver
Island Rock and Alpine Garden Society

Coming March 17 and 18! The spectacular **Annual Spring Show** of the Vancouver Island Rock and Alpine Garden Society.

As well as rock and alpine plants, classes include succulent, woodland and wetland plants. In addition to exhibits there are commercial and member plant and seed sales, displays, door prizes, silent auction and raffle, and tea. This year will showcase a "Sempervivum Extravaganza".

The show runs from 1 pm to 8 pm on Friday, March 17 and 9 am to 3 pm on Saturday, March 18 at Cadboro Bay United Church, 2625 Arbutus Road, Victoria.

Admission is by donation. The club members' plant sale opens at 11 am on Saturday.

For more details, go to www.virags.ca or visit the Vancouver Island Rock and Alpine Garden Society Facebook page.

Eureka!

Rhodos, Victoriana and redwoods at April's ARS convention - April 27 - 30

An ARS convention on the West Coast always means voluptuous flowers that we Eastern gardeners simply cannot grow. Species with vast leaves and cabbage-size trusses, yellows to die for, fascinating gems for the rock garden, and the one native deciduous azalea that *will not* survive on the East Coast, *Rhododendron occidentale*.

All of these await ARS members who book passage to the national convention in Eureka, Calif., on the last weekend of April. Tours include the Humboldt Botanical Garden and several private gardens, and speakers include Steve Hootman of the Rhododendron Species Foundation, French hybridizer Marc Colombel, and botanist Peter Raven, formerly of the Missouri Botanical Garden, noted for his conservation and biodiversity advocacy. It's all so, so alluring.



R. occidentale

But there's something about this convention locale that no other venue can top: redwoods, *Sequoia sempervirens*. Drive south toward Mendocino, and there's a state highway that's named Avenue of the Giants, for all the soaring specimens that dwarf us pipsqueak motorists. There's a tree you can drive through (not the one that fell on Jan. 8, farther south), and a gondola ride that takes you high through the trees. Go to <http://avenueofthegiants.net> to download a map and brochure, or have them mailed to you. Or head north, to Redwood National Park and several affiliated state redwood parks, which are designated as a World Heritage Site as well as an International Biosphere Reserve. You might add a few days to your rhododendron trip to camp in the parks or stay in nearby lodges. The National Parks Service's website has much information: <https://www.nps.gov/redw/index.htm>.

Meanwhile, back in Eureka, the local architecture rivals the rhododendrons for color and flamboyance. On Saturday, ARS members will have the option of taking an architectural tour of Eureka and nearby Ferndale, which the Los Angeles Times called "the best preserved Victorian village in California." The tour includes breakfast at the flabbergasting Carson Mansion in Eureka.

If action is what you want, you might even skip the Saturday night banquet and head for the roller derby at nearby Redwood Acres Fairgrounds, featuring competition by such all-female teams as the Redwood Rollers and the Widow Makers Exposition.

For full information on the ARS convention, go to <http://eurekarhody.org/convention.php>, which has a registration form, hotel information and more. The deadline to avoid a late-registration fee is March 22.

For information on all sorts of things to do in and around Eureka and Humboldt county, check out this website: <http://101things.com/humboldt/category/activities-attractions/tours-activities-attractions>.



Our view in Eureka and Humboldt County: An exuberant Victorian house and two forms of *R. occidentale*.



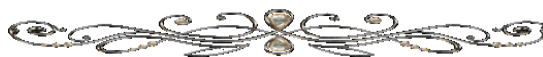
TRUSS SHOW...DISPLAY...MEMBER VOTING...2017

Our truss show and voter favorites this year will be on Monday, May 1st.

Lynn Ferrie, Nadine Minkler, Carolyn Marquardt, Carrie George and Lois Blackmore met to discuss a format to encourage member participation in this annual event. The focus was to create a strategy that would encourage entries in a more simple format. For each category, the winners will be awarded a bottle of wine.

The following list describes the entry categories:

1. Best red truss
2. Best purple truss
3. Best orange truss
4. Best pink truss
5. Best yellow truss
6. Best white truss
7. Best lavender truss
8. Best multi-color truss
9. Best speckled truss
10. Best scented rhododendron/azalea
11. Best hammerhead
12. Best largest undamaged leaf
13. Best leaf with indumentum
14. Best leaf with tomentum
15. Best stemmed unusual foliage rhododendron
16. Best stemmed rhododendron
17. Best azalea
18. Best companion plant
19. Best flower arrangement
20. Most flaccid truss
21. Most weevil notched leaf
22. This Bud's for You...bud and leaf



APRIL 14

APRIL 15-16

MAY 1

MAY 5-7

JUNE 18

MEMBERS ONLY PLANT SALE

PUBLIC PLANT SALE

MAY MEETING AND TRUSS SHOW

TRUSS SHOW MARY WINSPEAR CENTRE

ANNUAL PICNIC



Upcoming Events

2017	Event	Place
Mar 6 7:30	General Meeting - The Couvelier Pavilion Bernie Dinter - The Changing Gardening World	Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road
Mar 17-18	Vancouver Island Rock and Alpine Garden Society Annual Spring Show 1 p.m.-8 p.m. and 9 a.m.-3 p.m. respectively	Cadboro Bay United Church 2625 Arbutus Road, Victoria
Mar 20 7:30	Propagation Group Meeting At Ken and Madeleine Webb's	5008 Old West Saanich Rd
Apr 3 7:30	General Meeting - 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 Marquardt's Farm Members Only - Friday, April 14	4640 Cordova Bay Road 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 for Conference registration Red Lion Hotel reservations separate from registration or 1-800-733-5466 Early booking is recommended.	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 7:30	Truss Show - 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 5-7	Truss Show – Mary Winspear Centre	Mary Winspear Centre 2243 Beacon Ave, Sidney, BC
May 15 7:30	Propagation Group Meeting call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	TBA
Jun 18 Noon	Sunday BBQ at Marquardt's Farm	4640 Cordova Bay Road Victoria
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
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