



The Victoria Rhododendron Society Newsletter

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May 2017

tkmcmillan@telus.net

Thirty-Seventh Year of Publication

<http://victoriarhodo.ca>

MEETING 7:30

MONDAY, May 8, 2017

Couvelier Pavilion at the HCP Gardens

505 Quayle Road, VICTORIA, B. C.

Gardens Open 6:00 p.m. - Doors Open 7:00 p.m.

Members' Rhododendron Truss Show

Note the date is Monday, May 8th (*and not Monday, May 1st*) for the members' rhododendron truss show. Bring in your blooms for others to admire! The more colour and fragrance in our hall, the better.

There will be a competition for the best pink rhodo, best white and so on. For details please see [pages 7 - 11](#) of this newsletter.

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TIMBITS
will be provided by
The Victoria Rhododendron
Society
for the Truss Show

Please email Betty Gordon at
bbgordon@shaw.ca if you have
questions or call (250.479.0210).
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

Editor's Notes

by Theresa McMillan



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"The Circle of Learning" (about Rhododendrons) on April 3 was a big success, with over sixty members present. We were seated in a large circle in the Mel Couvelier Building.

It was still light outside and many members had already toured the rhododendron garden.

At the meeting, we were shown many beautiful rhododendron pictures of Kathy McKay's garden taken by Ryan Barry.

Norma Senn showed us how to build a simple solar water feature suitable for a balcony. She brought the solar pump bought through the ARS site of Amazon.ca on the internet.

The Circle of Learning began with the curator of the Rhododendron Garden at the HCP, Bill McMillan, giving us a brief talk about the overall needs of rhododendrons. He referred especially to the heavy soils and poor drainage of his garden at the Hort. Centre. The secret to success with such difficult soil is to "plant rhododendrons high", using well draining rhodo soil.

The second presenter was Calvin Parsons who helps Bill in the Rhodo Garden. Calvin spoke about pruning, sometimes referred to as "chainsaw" pruning, which drew some expressions of horror from our members. Several members have too large rhododendrons with blooms too high to see and tangles of branches from the ground. This habit shades out more delicate neighbours, often killing them.

Cutting the trunks of the big rhodos with chain-saws leaves rhodos looking horrible the first year but by the second year, many branches and leaves surround the cut and soon the plant is renewed by many blooms. Another method of dealing with too large rhododendrons is called "raising the skirts", where all the branches from the ground up to a preferred level are cut flush to the bark of the tree. Now companion plants under and beside the rhododendron can flourish and be seen. As well, air circulation around the rhododendrons is

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better and weevil damage is much less.

The third topic, growing rhododendrons in pots was discussed by Roy Blackmore. Roy is growing many Jim Barlup hybrids in big pots on his extensive sundecks. He uses very coarse bark mulch at the bottom of his pots, ensuring perfect drainage. Fir cones at the bottom of the pots also provide excellent drainage. Roy also fertilizes sparingly with well-rotted steer manure to ensure the plants do not get too big and he waters carefully (as we all do) in the summer.

Sharon Joseph brought up an unusual problem with the rhododendrons she grows on her balcony.

These plants are under cover from above, and do not get rainwater. Using tap water results in spotty growth for her plants. Other members had suggestions, especially if they have tried to keep tropical fish using city water. Basically, get the chlorine etc. out of the water by letting the water sit in a pail for several hours before use. Aerating the water before putting it on the rhododendrons is also helpful.

It was a lively meeting, with all sorts of participation and suggestions going around.



Victoria Rhododendron Society

Open Garden Tours



Thursday, April 20 3 pm to Dusk

- **Karen and Burns Morrison**
2150 Ferndale Rd, Victoria

Thursday, April 27 3 pm to Dusk

- **Kathy McKay**
1894 Chinook Place, N. Saanich
 - **Sandy Joinson**
7978 Galbraith Crescent, N. Saanich
- Also visit the nearby **Dominion Brook Park**
8801 E. Saanich Rd, N. Saanich*

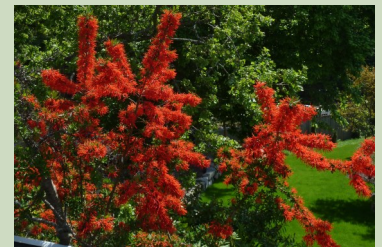


Thursday, May 04 3 pm to Dusk

- **Johanna & Moe Massa**
5024 Glinz Lake Rd, Sooke
- **Lloyd & Linda Gilmore**
2080 Ludlow Rd, Sooke

Sunday, May 07 1 to 4 pm

- **Agnes & David Lynn**
3913 Woodhaven Terr., Victoria



Wednesday, May 10 3 pm to Dusk

- **Bruce & Anne Maycock**
2664 Seaview Rd. Victoria

Thursday, May 18 3 pm to Dusk

- **Keiko & William Alkire**
2662 Queenswood Drive, Victoria
- **Carol & Bill Dancer**
3950 Sherwood Rd, Victoria





NOTES FROM THE BOARD

All committee reports were adopted as presented i.e. minutes, membership and financial.

Sharon, Theresa and Bill have been working on the archives of the VRS. The overall goal is to have these records digitized for preservation.

Calvin reported that the gardens at the Mary Winspear Centre are now the responsibility of the Town of Sidney. The grounds department will be overseeing the gardens as of last week and when time permits, a survey of any irrigation system that is currently in place. As discussed by board members, Calvin is tasked with the responsibility to pursue how the VRS may help with this project. The VRS has been given permission to have a weekend planting session when appropriate.

Calvin is developing a website that displays the photograph, color, bloom time and size of every Jim Barlup hybrid. It will soon appear on the VRS website. As well, he will develop a webpage advertising our annual sale. This will allow members to send this information to friends and through the internet.

The Mary Winspear Truss show is on the first weekend in May. Volunteers are needed to help set up on Friday, May 5 starting at 1 pm. Please have all trusses ready for labels. Our fancy vases will be ready to receive these starting at 2 pm. until 4 pm. Take down will be at 2 pm. on Sunday, May 7. Again, volunteers will be needed.

Our annual truss show is at our regular meeting on Monday, May 8. Please note the date change. The gardens at the HCP will be open at 6 pm. Entries for the truss show will start at 7 pm. All entries must be in place by 8:15 pm. Voting will start at 8:15pm. Each board member will ask an assistant to help with the counting of the votes. Coffee and Timbits will be served throughout the evening. There is a template in this newsletter allowing members to fill out their entry forms.

Ian is working on open gardens for this coming bloom season. Information will be in the calendar section of the newsletter.

The Barlup Legacy continues to grow at the Marquardt farm. New board members were apprised of this continuing legacy.

Lois asked for a review of the newest kind of meeting, "The Circle of Learning". Board members commented particularly on member participation.

Our annual picnic will take place at the Marquardt Farm on June 18. This early change of date is to avoid a conflict with the Victoria Hardy Plant Group Study Weekend at the Mary Winspear Centre.

Volunteer Needed

The Society needs a volunteer to do an examination of the accounts.

Article 20 of the Constitution and Bylaws requires the books of the Society to be examined annually.

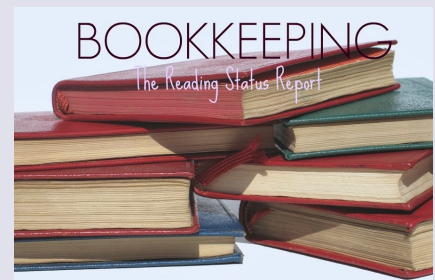
This should be a straightforward task, estimated to take approximately two hours. It will involve a review of paper and computer records which are at the treasurer's home located in Saanich. After the examination a report will be provided to the Board.

I look forward to your involvement. Thank you.

Bill Gordon, Treasurer

<mailto:bbgordon@shaw.ca>

Victoria Rhododendron Society



OBSERVATIONS BY OUR MEMBERS

by Theresa McMillan

In March's Newsletter (actually written in mid-February) I wrote an article wondering how the unusually long, cold winter was going to affect our gardens. Linda and I hoped to get many emails from our members, to no avail.

So here are some observations from the ten people at April's Board of the Victoria Rhododendron Society meeting.

The general feeling was that Spring was delayed by a month or more. The record long cold spell was not especially destructive. Heavy snowfall that broke plants like the blizzard of 1997 fortunately did not happen.

The coldest temperatures in our gardens, -10C (not counting the wind chill factor) was recorded by Lois and Roy Blackmore up on Triangle Mountain.

Lois and a few other members noticed that the deer were munching on the new flowers and leaves of hellebore and erythronium, something

people had never seen before. I have noticed daffodils and members of the narcissus family remain untouched and form bright gold blooms in gardens and even in tangles of blackberries.

Carrie George and others commented there were many more rabbits than usual. However, Ann Allen and Ian Duncan near Prospect Lake and Bill and Theresa McMillan near Hatley Park in Colwood have native forests around them. They do not see rabbits. Native predatory birds of the forest such as owls and hawks hunt and eat them.

Squirrels can be real pests with tulips, digging up and eating the bulbs. Deer continue to be scourges of tulip flowers.

Lloyd Gilmore and others have found that rats move from the cold outdoors into heated greenhouses and proceed to eat many tender plants and precious seedlings.

We will be making more observations as spring progresses.



APRIL FOOLS ...WE ARE NOT

by Lois Blackmore

The first two weekends in April proved that members of the VRS are not only generous in friendship, but are also generous in the spirit of working together toward a common goal. A call for helpers was issued in preparation for our plant sale on the Easter weekend.

On April 2, four trucks, crammed from top to



bottom with rhododendrons, arrived at the Marquardt Farm. These plants had been growing and stored at the homes of Ken and Madeleine and Calvin. The trucks were greeted by a surprisingly large number of volunteers from our club. As each truck arrived, a group was there to help unload. It was delightful to see a leader emerge to take charge of each truck. Soon a system was underway at each arrival. Then the action of unloading the trucks began. (Where do these go? ... Onto a table, set up for pricing.)

How about pricing? New labels with our logo intact were ready to go. Marking was easy. \$15... \$20...\$25...each plant was labeled with name, price, species or hybrid including a place for the grower. Bookkeeping will be easy. Each plant has a tear-off tag with the amount and grower on it as



well. Perhaps we have established a plan for sales

that will work perfectly: priced and ready to go. Now, where do these labeled plants go?

Tony and Carolyn arranged a large area next to the new greenhouse, ready with ground protec-



tion cloth for the Barlup plants to be placed. Then the fun begin. These special plants were arranged in alphabetical order. Back and forth. Back and forth. Oh! Oh! We only have 450 plant labels.

A week later: it is now April 9, 10 o'clock on a Sunday morning. I am arriving to see a smaller, but just as enthusiastic group already organized, pricing, placing and chatting away, as once more the action begins with just a few more plants for the alphabetized group. The larger and more established plants are placed in an area where buyers will be able to amble amongst the larger plants to see what is available.



April 14, 10:00 am. Let the fun begin! Our members, friends and family are invited to have a "first go" at

choosing from this most unusual selection of rhododendrons.

A huge thank you to all. May the Easter weekend be sunny and warm!





A MOST WONDERFUL TIME OF THE YEAR...IT IS WHAT WE HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR

by Lois Blackmore

It has been a long, cold and wet winter and we often wondered if it would ever end. Sometimes, weekly... often daily, we would peek at our rhododendrons wondering if they would survive the cold, how much frost damage there was to leaves and buds and if spring was ever going to come to Victoria. Ever hopeful we would meet, talk and discuss the weather and its effect on those plants that we love. We never gave up.


AND HERE WE ARE

Another year to see and find such pleasure in those plants we have come to cherish.

Our more formal season began with our plant sale at the Marquardt Farm on April 14, a day set aside for members only. The next two days, April 15 and 16, the farm was open to the public for viewing and sales. Many, many volunteers gave their time and effort to create such a special sale. This is the first time ever that the propagating group has created all the plants that were for sale.

Following the plant sale, some of our members will be attending the ARS Spring Convention in Eureka, CA. The dates for that conference are April 27-30.

The next week is the public showing of our rhododendron trusses at the Mary Winspear Centre, from Friday to Sunday, May 5-7. Volunteers are needed for setup May 5 afternoon. The show will be open to the public from Friday to Sunday, May 7. Again, volunteers are needed to help with the dismantling of the show starting at 2 pm. Please use the entry labels in this newsletter for displaying the name of each truss.

Our member truss show and display will be on our meeting night of May 8 at the HCP. The garden will open at 6 pm. for viewing and doors to the building will open at 7 pm. All trusses must be entered in the proper category with name of the truss clearly displayed. Members will vote for their favorite truss in each category. Again, please use the entry labels in this newsletter. Display bottles will be available upon entry to the building. Voting will begin at 8:15. As it is Canada's 150th birthday in 2017, we will be serving a Canadian favorite, Timbits, every bit a Canadian tradition as are the beaver and the maple leaf. 

ENTRY FORMS FOR ALL TRUSS SHOWS

The truss show entry forms that were available at the April meeting were really not explicit enough nor self-explanatory.

The official entry forms are included in this newsletter. Linda has created a new form, which will be used at the Mary Winspear Centre for the public truss show on the weekend of May 5-7 and for our members' truss show on May 8.

Please print them off at your convenience.

RED TRUSS

PLANT NAME:

YELLOW TRUSS

PLANT NAME:

ORANGE TRUSS

PLANT NAME:

LAVENDER TRUSS

PLANT NAME:

PURPLE TRUSS

PLANT NAME:

WHITE TRUSS

PLANT NAME:

PINK TRUSS

PLANT NAME:

MULTI COLOR TRUSS

PLANT NAME:

SPECKLED TRUSS

PLANT NAME:

AZALEA

PLANT NAME:

SCENTED RHODO

PLANT NAME:

HAMMER- HEAD

PLANT NAME:

LARGE UNDAMAGED LEAF

PLANT NAME:

INDUMENTUM LEAF

PLANT NAME:

TOMENTUM LEAF

PLANT NAME:

WEEVEL NOTCHED LEAF

PLANT NAME:

STEMMED RHODO

PLANT NAME:

COMPANION PLANT

PLANT NAME:

ARRANGEMENT

PLANT NAME:

THIS BUD'S 4U

PLANT NAME:

UNUSUAL STEMMED FOLIAGE

PLANT NAME:

SCENTED AZALEA

PLANT NAME:

Upcoming Events

2017	Event	Place
Apr 17 7:00	Propagation Group Meeting - come early to Playfair Park Call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	Playfair Park, off Rock St Victoria
Apr 20- May 18	Open Garden Tours - see list of gardens on page 3	
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 25-29	Screening of 'Call of the Forest' - Diana Beresford-Kroeger Tel: 204 775 4092 Email: allegra@meritmotionpictures.com or calloftheforest.ca	CineCenta, Student Union Bldg. UVic, Victoria
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, carrieonupthefountain@gmail.com	Cowichan Exhibit. Grounds Main Hall, Mays Rd & Island Hwy Duncan, BC
May 5-7	Truss Show – Mary Winspear Centre Afternoon Friday May 5 to 2 p.m. Sunday, May 7	Mary Winspear Centre 2243 Beacon Ave, Sidney, BC
May 7 9:30-2:00	Nanaimo Chapter Spring Show and Plant Sale Centennial Building	Beban Park 2300 Bowen Rd, Nanaimo, BC
May 8 6:00	Truss Show - The Couvelier Pavilion Garden Gates open at 6:00 and Doors open at 7:00	Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road
May 13 -14	Nanaimo Rhododendron Society Public Garden Tour Or call Allen McRae 250-758-7589 for details.	Click or call for details
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 & Post-Tours ranging from ~ May 7 – May 30	Denmark, Finland, Germany, Netherlands and Sweden