



The Victoria Rhododendron Society Newsletter

4821 Townsend Drive, Victoria, BC V8Z 5P2

NOVEMBER 2017

tkmcmillan@telus.net

Thirty-Seventh Year of Publication

<http://victoriarhodo.ca>

MEETING 7:30

MONDAY, November 6, 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.

Sean Rafferty- The Lure of Species Rhododendrons

The Lure of Species Rhododendrons

Sean Rafferty is our speaker for November. He is currently president of the Species Foundation in Federal Way. Sean is a species expert. He and his wife Brenda have been on several treks to the Himalayas, searching for new rhododendron species and companion plants. They are currently establishing a new Rhododendron Garden in Shirley B.C. after moving from Vancouver, shortly after retirement. Come and hear from an expert, now a member of our Victoria Rhododendron Society. Come...enjoy...and learn!

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REFRESHMENTS

for the next meeting to be provided by:

Ian Back	David Ballantyne
Roy & Lois Blackmore	Stephan & Marjorie Brice
Archie & Norah Brown	Bert & Norma Buckley

Please email Betty Gordon at

bbgordon@shaw.ca or (250.479.0210) if

you are coming with your wrapped goodies

and 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



by Theresa McMillan

On a warm, sunny evening at the Mel Couvelier Pavilion at the HCP, Jeff de Jong gave an entertaining talk, "A Peek into 2018, America Meets Europe".

At first, he showed us an amusing series of greetings, how Americans greet each other, how French, Italians, Netherlands (three kisses on two cheeks!), then (with Lois Blackmore) Canadians. (It isn't often that laughter is heard at one of our meetings.) He also introduced us to Dutch customs, like a special kind of bread (examples of it were on the refreshments table) and gave us samples of a strong salty licorice and told us that Netherlands are the tallest people in the world.

Then Jeff showed us many pictures of beautiful gardens in the Netherlands, which often show spring gardens featuring swaths of intense colour from bulbs planted very close together. These gardens will be part of the ARS Convention in Europe (Denmark, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden) on May 20-26, 2018. There is an optional pre-tour in Holland on May 7- 12th.



Jeff de Jong

Horticulturist, radio personality

Image from Linked in



by Lois Blackmore

OCTOBER BOARD MEETING

Monies for our Society are well in order. We are awaiting instructions as to where to send the donation of \$1000 to Nepal Earthquake Relief Fund for Schools, as organized from the 2015 ARS Convention and approved by our members.

We need to propose a donation of \$500 to the HCP for care of the rhododendron garden at the HCP. This was forgotten at our AGM.

The proposal for a rhododendron growing-on and storage area is before the board of the HCP. The VRS board has already approved funding for fencing and irrigation for these areas. We are waiting for formal approval of this proposal from the HCP.

The board also approved an application to have a Barlup Rhododendron Garden/Grove within the grounds at the HCP. The proposed area is past the current Rhododendron Garden, the Japanese Garden and the Bonsai Garden. The proposed area is vacant with open overhead light and adjacent to the propagating/growing-on area. It is conveniently located close to a large gate allowing for the donated equipment to have access. This proposal will come before the HCP Board in November.

The Christmas Party will be held on Monday, December 6, 2017. The usual turkey and ham will be provided, with members contributing savories and desserts. Non-perishable food items will be asked for and the monies from the raffle will be donated to the Food Bank.

The proposed plant sale will be held at the Marquardt Farm on April 28, 2018 with approval from the Marquardts. After much discussion, the board approved a one-day sale, with members' buying hours from 10 until noon. Public sales hours are from noon until 4 pm. Plant placement and tagging will be on April 21, 2018.

After some discussion, the board approved the continuation of the member participation voting system for the flower show in May. We continue to work on an organization system to make it easier for members to display their trusses. The date for the Flower Show is May 7, 2018.





How the Woolly Bear Caterpillar Became Famous

In the fall of 1948, Dr. C. H. Curran, curator of insects at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, took his wife 40 miles north of the city to Bear Mountain State Park to look at woolly bear caterpillars.

- Dr. Curran collected as many caterpillars as he could in a day, determined the average number of reddish-brown segments, and forecast the coming winter weather through a reporter friend at *The New York Herald Tribune*.

Dr. Curran's experiment, which he continued over the next eight years, attempted to prove scientifically a weather rule of thumb that was as old as the hills around Bear Mountain. The resulting publicity made the woolly worm the most recognizable caterpillar in North America.

The caterpillar Curran studied, the banded woolly bear, is the larval form of *Pyrrharctia isabella*, the Isabella tiger moth.

- This medium-size moth, with yellowish-orange and cream-colored wings spotted with black, is common from northern Mexico throughout the United States and across the southern third of Canada.

- As moths go, the Isabella isn't much to look at compared with other species, but its immature larva, called the *black-ended bear* or the *woolly bear* (and, throughout the South, *woolly worm*) is one of the few caterpillars most people can identify.

Woolly bears do not actually feel much like wool—they are covered with short, stiff bristles of hair.

Article from The 1999 Old Farmer's Almanac

Reprint from ARS, Eureka Chapter, October 2017 newsletter

New Information Kiosk donated and built by the Trelawnys

In memory of John and Ruth Trelawny—Passionate gardeners and supporters of Finnerty Gardens

As a project to honor their parents, the Trelawny family has been working with the University for the past year on the design of an information Kiosk to be placed in the gardens, just inside the main gates. The brothers spent Easter weekend erecting the new cedar kiosk, and it looks (and smells) great. It will hold the new walking maps of the Gardens, and information on the history and founders of the site and the Rhododendron collection.



The Trelawnys: posts are up, ready for the roof.



UVic crew—Jeremy and Chelsea

Reprint from UVIC "Finnerty Garden Friends" October 2017 newsletter



Comments on Norman Todd's Memorial and Pictures

by Theresa McMillan

On a fine late summer day, September 23rd, at the Couvelier Pavilion, we had a Memorial for Norman Todd. Family and friends and many rhodoholics enjoyed pictures of Norm's life, chatted, had tea, coffee and tasty snacks.

At the back of the room, I saw several items from Norm's life. First was a navy polar fleece vest with "Firwood" embroidered on it, the name of the nursery Norm ran for many years. There was a garden hat covered with pins from many conferences. The distinctive vest and hat made Norm easily recognizable in any crowd in special events.

Another item was a cartoon drawn in black ink, showing a very frustrated Norm looking at a beautiful building with a glass roof. Inevitably in our area, gulls had found it, with predictable results. Norm holds a gun and has a box of rocks and a can of Raid at his feet. All useless. The gulls are happily defiant....



***A sample of Norm's wisdom and knowledge found in his writings.*

Bounty of *Basilicum*

by Norm Todd

Some things are truly worth the wait. I sowed some seed of the big-leaf *R. basilicum* thirty-three years ago. The one remaining plant is now four meters high and is planted, unfortunately, too



R. basilicum

Courtesy of Hirsutum website

Photo by Garth Wedemire ,09 March, 2010

Location private garden Nanaimo, BC

close to the driveway. The arching branches so annoyed the garbage collector that he would take purposeful aim at these big paddles of leaves, using his truck as a mobile macerator while dervishly screaming unprintable descriptions of

the offending owner and the innocent basilicum. It had to be pruned and tied back.

I cherished the plant but it never bloomed. Every time I passed it I would coo encouraging words and tell it that I was not going to croak until it showed me a blossom. It has bloomed for the last three years. Now, as I pass it I am somewhat trepidatious and have changed my message to one of praise for its beauty and how it is adding to my longevity.

This year it opened its first bloom at the start of February and two months later it is still resplendent. The first flush of colour is a soft salmon cream. Inside, the corolla is a dark purple blotch. The substance of the flower is of a heavy, waxy, vellum-like texture. As they age the flowers lose the warmer tones and become a cool cream. There are sixteen stamens. The flowers were not harmed by the frost we had in March when it got down to -3°C. Some of the thinner substance blooms like 'Snow Lady', 'Airy Fairy', and *R. ririei* went brown. The rhododendrons that bloom early do last longer than the later flowering ones but I can't think of another rhododendron where the flowers last for two months. In fairness, I do have to mention 'Lee's Scarlet' and 'Nobleanum Coccineum' for length of bloom. The latter opened its first flower in October, the last in



R. basilicum

Courtesy of Hirsutum website

Photo by Rinus Manders, 29 October, 2014

Location: Bodnant Garden, Conwy, Wales, U.K.

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

March. 'Lee's Scarlet' had colour for 14 or 15 weeks. However, these plants open their blooms in a succession; each individual truss lasting three or four weeks. Still, the vital question is, dare I take selfish, ominous comfort from the longevity of the blooms on *basilicum*?

Basilicum (meaning 'royal') is in the Falconera Subsection in the Subgenus Hymenanthes. Its closest relatives are *R. arizelum* and *R. rothschildii*. I read, fairly recently, that the true *basilicum* is rare in cultivation. I hope, for snobby reasons, that mine is correctly named. No one has contradicted its appellation but not many of the authorities have had a chance to cast judgment. I was ecstatic when about two weeks ago two passing municipal workers who were looking for potholes to fill came into the nursery and one wanted to buy that "tall plant with the pale yellow flowers". The potential buyer was less than ecstatic when I told him it was not for sale.

In a woodland setting there are no better plants for early season impact than the large-leaf rhododendron. The big drawback is their slowness in reaching the age of puberty. One can rationalize about this characteristic by reminding oneself that one must treat rhododendrons as foliage plants; as a bonus they occasionally have flowers. Now that there are one or two that indulge themselves (and me) in an annual floral extravaganza, I consider the twenty or thirty or more years waiting to see a bloom, time to be well spent; yet there can be no denying the obvious truth that, in modern times, when the average person will not buy a green banana, the large-leaf rhododendrons are merely botanical curiosities.

Some authorities claim that a flower lasts for as long as it takes to get the job done, (i.e. to effect pollination). I am not expert enough to be able to say if *basilicum* is one of the plants that does not ever self-pollinate. There are other rhododendrons blooming close enough to *basilicum* that would probably have compatible pollen. So this year I will leave the spent flowers on the plant and determine if any seed have formed. I then plan to sow these seed. I may have

time to find out if the seed will germinate but we are now at the end of the last weeks of April and the first flowers are still adorning the driveway. I



R. basilicum

Courtesy of [Hirsutum](#) website

Photo by Garth Wedemire ,01 May, 2008

Location private garden Nanaimo, BC

will not remove them. I will indulge the garbage collector and let him press them with his heavily laden tires. Plants give pleasure in so many ways. *Basilicum* deserves a few bravos and oles. "Large was his bounty and his soul sincere."

Postscript - Not fifteen minutes after I typed the word "sincere" above, the garbage truck was here and deftly put a gouge in my wife's car. I must exonerate the driver. This was his first time here (not the usual driver) and he came in the wrong way. He had not seen *basilicum* at that point. He was still able to crush the flowers on the way out.

Reprint of May 2006

Victoria Rhododendron Society Memberships Are Now Due

Your Memberships can be renewed by:

1. Completing the Membership Form on the last page and mailing your cheque as indicated on form OR
2. Pay by cash or cheque at the next General Meeting, October 2nd.

Please see the last page of the Newsletter for the Membership Form.



International Rhododendron Conference "North America Meets Europe"

Status Report: September 15, 2017.

Spaces are filling up. There is a maximum on the tours. All registrants have been notified that their registration form was received. **If you didn't receive an acknowledgement, you are not registered.** After billing starts, payment will be due by November 15th. After November 15th registration is open to everyone. If you have questions contact registrar@ars2018.org. Here is where we stand after week 2 of registration:

Number Registered	People	Single Rooms	Double Rooms	Capacity*
Pre-Tour 1, Holland	23	1	11	40 to 97 people
Pre-Tour 2, Germany	28	1	13.5 †	100 people max
Pre-Tour 3, Denmark-Sweden	37	0	18.5 †	45 people min.
Convention in Bremen, Germany	52	1	25.5	200 people max
Post-Tour, Finland	21	0	10.5 †	25 to 45 people

* If we reach the maximum we will start wait-listing and try to get more spaces.

† A female single wants to share a double room on tours 2, 3, & Post-Tour, Finland.

Summary: We have 6 from Australia, 9 from Canada, 2 from Finland, 1 from France, 2 from Scotland and 32 from the US.

Upcoming Events

2017	Event	Place
Nov 6 7:30	General Meeting - The Couvelier Pavilion "The Lure of 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 Wildflowers of Switzerland & Austria by Bike with Anne Allen & Ian Duncan	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 of South Africa with Norma Senn	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 What's Blooming in the Garden with Carol Dancer	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 TBA	4640 Cordova Bay Road Victoria
Apr 16 7:30	Propagation Group Meeting Call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	TBA
Apr 21 TBA	Preparation for Plant Sale - Plant placement and tagging	4640 Cordova Bay Road Victoria
Apr 28 10:00-4:00	Plant Sale at Marquardts' Farm **One day only**	4640 Cordova Bay Road Victoria
May 7 7:30	General Meeting - Flower Show	Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road
May 7-30	ARS Convention - North America meets Europe - May 20-26 With optional Pre & Post-Tours ranging from ~ May 7 – May 30	Denmark, Finland, Germany, Netherlands and Sweden
May 21 7:30	Propagation Group Meeting Call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	TBA
Jun 18 7:30	Propagation Group Meeting Call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	TBA
Jun 24 Noon	VRS Summer Picnic	TBA
Sep 3 7:30	General Meeting - The Couvelier Pavilion	Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road
Sep 17 7:30	Propagation Group Meeting Call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	TBA
Oct 1 7:30	General Meeting - The Couvelier Pavilion	Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road
Oct 15 7:30	Propagation Group Meeting Call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	TBA
Nov 5 7:30	General Meeting - The Couvelier Pavilion	Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road
Nov 19 7:30	Propagation Group Meeting Call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	TBA
Dec 3 6:30	Christmas Potluck Dinner - The Couvelier Pavilion	Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road



MEMBERSHIPS

Full membership includes membership in the VicRS and the American Rhododendron Society of which we are an affiliated Chapter. This brings the ARS quarterly Journal with expert articles and colour photographs. Also included is the right to participate in the ARS annual conventions, and the ARS seed exchange and pollen bank. Members also receive the Newsletter of the VicRS.

Local Membership includes the newsletter and participation in local events, but does not include membership in the ARS.

Associate Membership enables members of other ARS Chapters to participate in the activities of the Victoria Chapter.

WHY JOIN VICRS?

- Meet others with like interests
- Learn about rhodos and more
- Have fun
- Rhodo raffle at each meeting
- Guest speakers at each meeting
- Informative Monthly Newsletter and quarterly ARS Journal
- Garden tours
- Annual June BBQ
- Discounts at many garden shops and nurseries

More info at www.victoriarhodo.ca

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Newsletters available by email only.

Last Name

First Name

Street Address

City Postal Code

Telephone #

Email Address

☐ I agree to have my info published in a Members Book.

Circle one of the following:

Regular Membership: \$35
Local Membership: \$25

Associate: \$10 Associate chapter _____

ARS Commercial-Corporate: \$90

ARS Sustaining: \$75

ARS Sponsoring: \$150

ARS Life, single: \$1,000 (Payable over 3 years)

ARS Life, family: \$1,500 (Payable over 3 years)

- Cash
- Cheque

All meetings of the society are open to the public and visitors are always welcome. Of particular interest to gardeners is our Annual Show and Sale, held in April or May. The show has spectacular displays of flowers, and there is a great variety of Rhododendrons and other plants for sale.

Monthly meetings are held on the first Monday of the month at 7:30 pm from September until May.

Meeting location:

HCP Glendale Gardens
505 Quayle Rd,
Victoria, B.C.

AIMS OF VICRS

VicRS aims to promote the cultivation, propagation and breeding of Rhododendrons, and to foster knowledge, fellowship, friendship and enthusiasm concerning Rhododendrons and allied plants. While the focus is on Rhododendrons, members' interests are wide. Talks on other shrubs, trees and herbs suitable for over or under planting are included, as are landscaping techniques and plant pathogens.