



The Victoria Rhododendron Society Newsletter



4821 Townsend Drive, Victoria, BC V8Z 5P2



October 2017

tkmcmillan@telus.net

Thirty-Seventh Year of Publication

<http://victoriarhodo.ca>

MEETING 7:30

MONDAY, October 2, 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.

A Peek into 2018. . . America Meets Europe with Jeff De Jong

Jeff De Jong, our speaker for October is a well-known expert on all things gardening. He hosts Gardening 101 at noon, Saturdays on CFX radio and has led several garden tours to Europe visiting gardens there. Jeff is particularly knowledgeable about the gardens of the Netherlands. As the Netherlands gardens are the first part of 'America Meets Europe 2018' garden tours, Jeff will give us a "Peek into 2018", a visual and knowledgeable presentation of some of those gardens. Come and see what the Netherlands has to offer. For more information on America Meets Europe, visit the ARS website ars2018.org.



PLEASE NOTE

**NEW MAILING ADDRESS of the
Victoria Rhododendron Society
is noted above**



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REFRESHMENTS

for the next meeting to be provided by:

Monika Winn

Keiko & William
Alkire

Anne Allen &
Ian Duncan

Sandra Allin

Elizabeth Argall

Cathie Arnold

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.



VICTORIA RHODODENDRON SOCIETY BOARD

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Editor's Notes



by Bill and Theresa McMillan

The Birds And The Bees - Everything You Wanted To Know About Hybridization But Were Afraid To Ask

On a warm September night, Lois Blackmore gave a Power Point Presentation of Jim Barlup's hybridization to the Victoria Rhododendron Society. There were many images of Jim's beautiful rhododendron hybrids.

To create hybrid rhododendrons, you need science, art, patience, dedication and have a goal, such as excellent foliage, flower colour, fragrance and size. In addition, keep good records.

Lois's presentation included images of Jim's precise and very organized process. Collect pollen. Fertilize "mother" seed plant. Hope you get seeds.

Collect and plant seeds.

Select seedlings that show vigour.

Plant them out and grow them on until they flower. (This could take 3 to 10 years).

The hard part... discard the less promising. Continue growing for more years until satisfied with the plant's durability.

Name and register only the best.

And if you are like Jim Barlup, after a 43-year journey and 243 registered hybrids, you will develop first class plants, win international recognition for research, and receive a GOLD MEDAL from the American Rhododendron Society.



R. Champagne Lace by Jim Barlup
(Glenna X Janet Blair)

Welcome New Members

Jim and Judy Barlup

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

Rhodo Donations and Volunteers Needed

There has been much progress at the Mary Winspear Rhodo Garden over the summer. The irrigation system was repaired and updated. The rose bushes have been removed and mulch was added to the garden. The rhodos looked very happy this summer.

We are now ready to continue our rhodo planting project. We would like volunteers to help plant donated rhodos on **Sunday, October 15, 2017**, from 9:30 am until noon. We will need diggers, planters, and recorders. Please email Calvin if you can help, cparsons937@gmail.com.

If you have rhodos to donate, please bring to the October 2, 2017 monthly meeting or email Calvin for pickup.

The VicRS wishes to thank the workers of the Township of Sidney for getting this work done during their many other commitments.

Calvin Parsons
Coordinator, Community Rhododendron Gardens



Mary Winspear Garden...beginnings

Volunteers -

What do they do?

*Well any number of things...
Volunteering provides one
with the most wonderful
opportunity and experience
to get out, socialize, get
some exercise, learn
something new and have
some fun.*

*Volunteering with no long
term commitment.
Freedom at its Best (FAIB).*

*So... is it 'Volunteer' or
'FAIB' ? :) Come and find
out. Just email Calvin at
cparsons937@gmail.com or
call 250-590-0489.*

Activities Are At:

- Mary Winspear Garden*
- HCP Gardens*

Thank you!

For The Cat Who Has Everything

by Norman Todd

The following article was published in the VRS newsletter of December 1993. This whimsical column is learned in history, rhodo-botany, Latin and feline psychology; and whimsy above all.

Did you notice the word 'who' in the title? If you do not think of cats as persons, this article will not interest you. It will interest you if you are in that most frustrating of situations when you just can't think of the ultimate present for that most significant cat in your life – to be given on that very, very special cat day. I have the answer and it may surprise you. It was *Rhododendron*



R. roxieanum* var. *oreonastes

Photo by Garth Wedemire , Apr 21, 2005

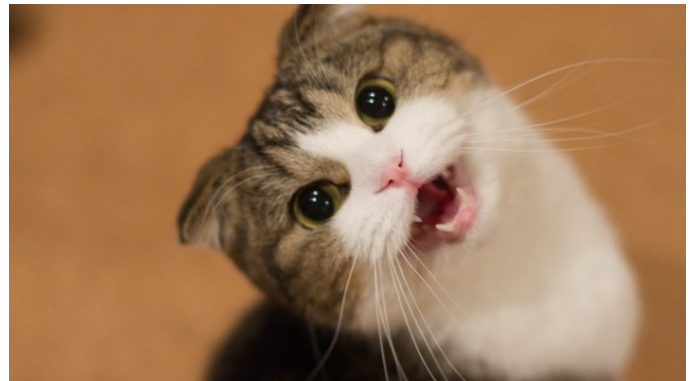
roxieanum var. *oreonastes*.

Don't turn off right now because you think *R. roxieanum* var. *oreonastes* will be too difficult a name for your cat to appreciate – just hang in and read a bit more.

You see, cats don't know many things by their names. And it is pretty well useless trying to get a cat to understand abstract things, e.g., things like 'the Natural Law Party' or 'relativity'. Cats recognize most things by smell. That is how they

recognize pretty well all tangible things; smart cats can even sense a few abstract things using this sense.

Anyway, *R. roxieanum* var. *oreonastes* sends cats into paroxysms of ecstasy. We all know that paroxysms do not always occur as pleasant events but when you see that closed-eyed Cheshire look on your cat's face and feel the vibes from its



tremulous twitching little nose, you will know this paroxysm is a good one.

You could also object to using a fairly abstract word like 'paroxysm' for your cat's intemperately orgasmic raptures, but even if your cat does not know that precise word, you can be sure it has a complete fix on the idea.

R. roxieanum var. *oreonastes* is a classic rhododendron fit for the garden of the most fastidious connoisseur. It kind of looks like a land-based green sea urchin. (That is *Strongylocentrotus droebachiensis*, just in case your cat is of the more than normally curious type, still alive and might like to know that).

R. roxieanum var. *oreonastes* belongs to the Taliense affiliations and, at least from a nurseryperson's point of view, possesses all of the bad qualities of that tribe, i.e., it is almost impossible to propagate from cuttings, is not easy to graft and, as it takes eons to bloom, it is hard to get seed and when you do, it might not be viable. When it does bloom, however, it is a real joy to behold and if you find yourself in the position of beholder, you could be excused for having one of these paroxysms all to yourself.

Being such a coveted plant, it makes sense for
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those who do own this rare and expensive rhododendron to be discreet and selective in letting the fact of your ownership be widely known because most of the specimens of *R. roxieanum* var. *oreonastes* in captivity are of a very portable size and visitors could have a paroxysm of envy and greed which could even end up in thievery.

You might think, then, that it would be logical, if you value your status as a collector of rare plants more than the love of your cat, not to tell your cat you have one in your garden.

However, I would advise against not telling your cat because it is a sure bet that your cat will sense the precise minute *R. roxieanum* var. *oreonastes* crosses your lot line. And anyway, you, having read this far, must be darn nearly desperate to let your cat experience one of those incontinent paroxysms.

If you know your Latin (I don't, so I'm just waiting for someone to tell me this paragraph is all nonsense) you will quickly intuit that the name itself – *oreonastes* – gives away about this interesting reactionary feline phenomenon. The *roxieanum* part of the moniker is something of a letdown because it's one of these commemorative names, eternally memorializing a **Mrs. Roxie Hanna** of Tali-fu, China, who was a friend of the plant's discoverer, or at least describer, **George Forrest**. Too bad we don't know more about Mrs. Roxie Hanna - perhaps - who knows – she may have had a weakness for aromatically induced paroxysms.

It's the *oreonastes* bit that is the mother lode. The 'oreo' portion really means 'mountain' in Latin, but cats are not too well versed in dead languages and, get this, they recognize the modern meaning of 'oreo' i.e., 'cookie'!

Ah ha! So then we move on to the '*nastes*' bit. You may not believe this, but this is the exception that proves the rule; cats have almost instant recognition of what '*nastes*' means in Latin. They do not make the correspondence to the modern English meaning of '*nastes*' i.e., 'unpleasant', but

go right to the Latin word '*nasitortium*' which means 'distortion of the nose'. You look at your cat in its oreonastical paroxysm and you will see what '*nasitortium*' means. The Romans knew what it meant and so does your cat. Nasturtiums evidently gave Romans nasal paroxysms and that's what they called them nasturtiums.

Romans almost certainly never said or smelled *R. roxieanum* var. *oreonastes*. It's almost impossible to be absolutely sure what kind of paroxysms they would have had they done so. Most likely, they would have given it a very wide berth after Pompey's 67 B.C., army's unfortunate run-in, which quickly developed into a run-out, with the poisonous honey from the Pontic azalea (*R. luteum*). In that instance, Pompey's army surely had a debilitating and paralyzing collective paroxysm that cost most of the soldiers in the army their lives at the hand of Mithridates, King



R. roxieanum var. *oreonastes*
Photo by Susan Lightburn, Sept 17, 2012

of Pontus.

Perhaps this does bring up a cautionary point. Watch out that there are no predators around when your cat is having its paroxysm because they are sitting ducks (??) in that state and to compound it, you yourself, might end up having a paroxysm of grief when looking at the moribund remains of your pet.

At this point I'm sure you want to know how I came by all this dope on God's ultimate gift to mousers. Well, the first *R. roxieanum* var.

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oreonastes I had I kept in a pot. At that time, I did not know how addictive it was to cats, but anyway it must not have been cat-accessible. Probably I kept it in the greenhouse, and it got to be about fourteen or fifteen inches tall and in age produced a flower bud. I must say my mind ran to thinking about installing special security devices to protect from human predation but I was guilelessly unaware that there were four – count them – “Tristan”, ‘Smudge’, ‘Timmy’ and ‘Kate’ – incipient paroxysmatic pussies right in my very own home.

I wondered why all of those exquisite narrow, lanceolate, indumented botanical marvels of advanced photosynthetic evolution were lying around the base of the plant. Then the flower bud disappeared and I had to look more closely.

We all know what rhododendron hairs are but the hairs I found were 2.1 to 4.6 cm. long, glandular, glabrous, white, sometimes black and white, orange flushed brown or black. These weren't rhododendron hairs. They were cats' hairs.

Next piece of evidence. At last year's club picnic I won the door prize – a *R. roxieanum* var. *oreonastes*. It was a beautiful plant in a four gallon pot. It had been expertly grown by **Clint Smith**. I went home thinking that the '93 picnic was the best we had ever had.

It sat on the deck where it could be admired from the kitchen window – by people. But it was admired much more closely by the purring pussy cats that lodge (dare I admit to thinking 'temporarily') at 5631 Batu Road. They had an orgy of paroxysms and one of the main branches was amputated – covered with cat hairs.

Some of you may see this as presenting a dilemma. Which or who comes first, cats or rhododendrons? I suspect most of you will plunk for the former and you will want to ingratiate yourself to your fat feline friend – by getting him, her or it that transcendently perfect gift, *R. roxieanum* var. *oreonastes*.

Don't be tempted by the claims of shysters touting catnip. This is like comparing slug's eggs to sturgeon on caviar. Go for the best; but be prepared for difficulties because *R. roxieanum* var. *oreonastes* is not easy to find. You will have to be committed and resolute in being your cats' benefactor responsible for providing the greatest hallucinogenic rapturous paroxysms by acquiring – preferable by theft – *R. roxieanum* var. *oreonastes*.

Cats truly pass this way but once. Dismiss that view that a cat's life is a vale of tears; make it a Garden of Eden. You have the answer.

For more information on paroxysms caused by ingesting rhododendrons or rhododendron products, see **David Leach's** article “The Two Thousand Year Curse of the Rhododendron” in *Rhododendron Information*, A.R.S. 1967. Also “Puzzles in Rhododendron Poison” by the author in ‘*Rhododendrons on a Western Shore*’ Ed., **A. McCarter**, VRS 1989.



R. roxieanum* var. *oreonastes

Arboretum Belmonte, Wageningen, Netherlands

Photo by Herman Van Ree, Oct 26, 2009



Pictures of the Celebration of Life for Moe Massa, September 16th, 2017. Courtesy of Nadine Minckler



Upcoming Events

2017	Event	Place
Oct 2 7:30	General Meeting - The Couvelier Pavilion "A Peek into 2018" with Jeff de Jong 2018 MEMBERSHIPS ARE DUE - SEE LAST PAGE OF NEWSLETTER Reminder: Members can bring Mary Winspear small rhodo donations	Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road
Oct 15 9:30 AM	Mary Winspear Rhodo Garden PLANTING OF DONATED RHODOS Volunteers are needed; please contact Calvin at cparsons937@gmail.com	Mary Winspear Comm. Hall Sidney, BC
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 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 - TBA	TBA
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	TBA
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
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



www.victoriarhodo.ca

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 underplanting are included, as are landscaping techniques and plant pathogens.

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

Mail to:

The Victoria Rhododendron Society
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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