



The Victoria Rhododendron Society Newsletter

4821 Townsend Drive, Victoria, BC V8Z 5P2

April 2018
tkmcmillan@telus.net

Thirty-Eighth Year of Publication
<http://victoriarhodo.ca>

MEETING 7:30

MONDAY, April 2, 2018

Couvelier Pavilion at the HCP Gardens

505 Quayle Road, VICTORIA, BC

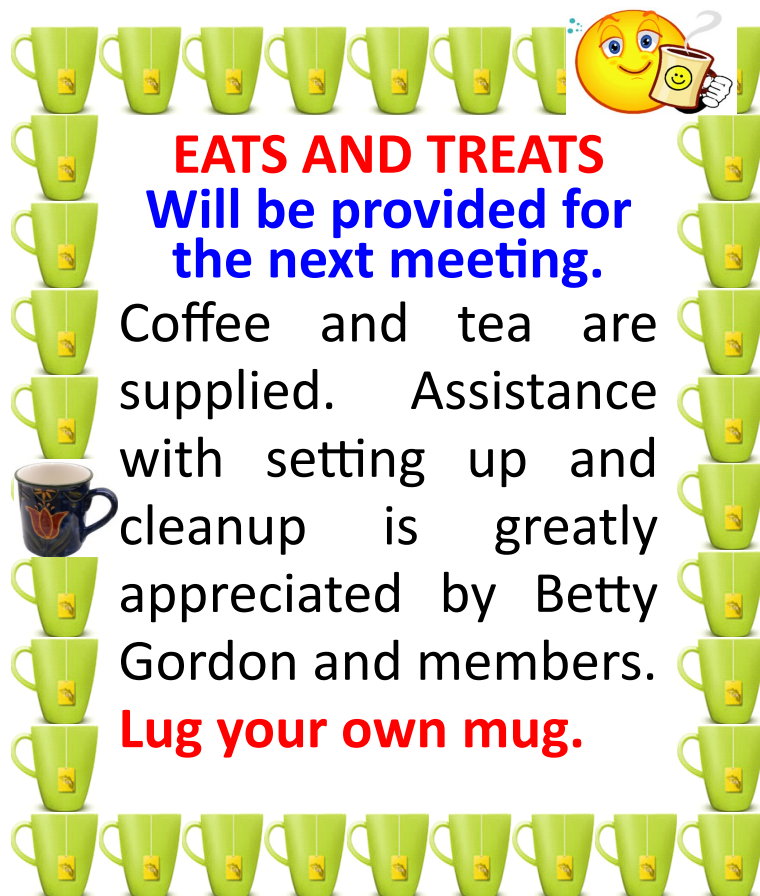
Presentation

Circle of Learning

Bring your questions and share your experiences.

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EATS AND TREATS
Will be provided for
the next meeting.

Coffee and tea are supplied. Assistance with setting up and cleanup is greatly appreciated by Betty Gordon and members.

Lug your own mug.



Carol Dancer's "What's Blooming in the Garden" was the talk for our March 5 VicRS meeting.

The screen for the pictures was set up at the front of the Couvelier Pavilion because, instead of the usual Power Point presentation, a slide show was in the offing.

Near the screen was a table covered with fresh flowers and flowering plants from Carol's winter garden, far more types than many people know of.

Of particular note (for me) were the many hellebores, their varying colours, forms (some doubles), and newer hybrids with outward-facing flowers, rather than the usual downward facing flowers whose corollas or centers are harder to see.

Hellebore blooms can be cut and floated so they can be seen, but many people find their fragrance irritating. Rather, a small branch of budding Japanese plum or fragrant witch hazel or daphne placed in a vase can lead to long-term indoor enjoyment.

Carol has noticed over the years, the changing climate has resulted in more insects in her winter garden, like earlier bees, but nothing like warmer weather infestations of aphids.

She loves her winter garden. As she said cheerfully, "no weeds, no watering".

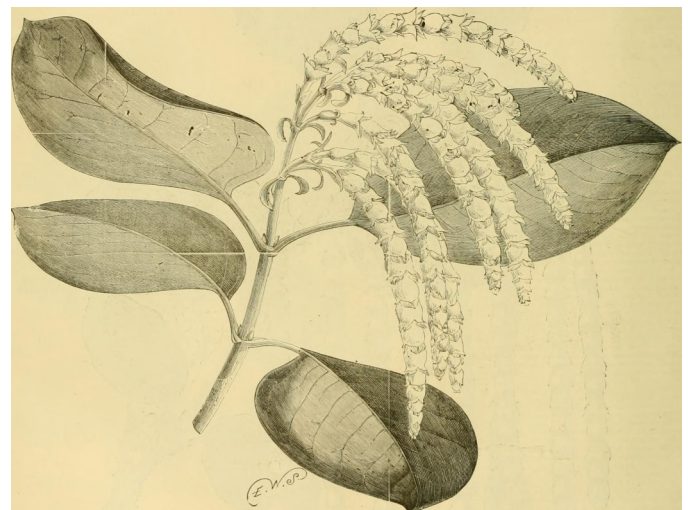
A list of plants from Carol's winter garden is as follows:

Carol Dancer's Winter Garden Plant List

1. Corylopsis pauciflora
2. Camellia sasanqua – blooms Nov. – Feb.
3. Daphne bholua – Nov. – Dec.
4. Daphne odora Mar.
5. Sarororocca (needs shade)
6. Garrya elliptria
7. Clematis cirrhosa
8. Choisya ternata – Sundance
9. Hebe 'various' cultivars
10. Viburnum bodnantense
11. Hamamelis (Witch-Hazel) Jelena, Arnold's Promise, many cultivars
12. Edgeworthia papyrifera
13. Osmanthus
14. Rhododendron dauricum
15. Rhododendron mucronulatum
16. Iris unguicularis
17. Hellebores
18. Bulbs



Viburnum x bodnantense
From Wikimedia Commons



Garrya elliptria

From Wikimedia Commons File:The Gardeners' chronicle - a weekly illustrated journal of horticulture and allied subjects (1904) (14769960905).jpg



NOTES FROM THE BOARD

March 2018

by Lois Blackmore

The new board for 2018-2019 met at the home of Carol Dancer. We welcomed new board members Lynne Ferrie and Brenda Macdonald. Unfortunately, Jackie Ralph was unable to attend because of work issues.

There were no minutes to be read because of the cancellation of the previous month's meeting, due to illness of some board members.

Our club continues to be well funded and Bill explained the amounts the club has in assets in the various accounts under the Victoria Rhododendron Society accounts.

Brenda has volunteered to look after club book sales, kneepads, etc. and will be the registrar for new members.

The April meeting is special because that our benefactors of the Barlup hybrid collection will be in Victoria on the Easter weekend, and will be attending our meeting for their first time. The board chose to make the "goodies" part of our evening to be more special. The VicRS will be providing eats and treats for this special occasion. This is just a small thank you to honour our guests.

There was much discussion regarding plants sales, plants locations, and care of plants compensation for our members who spend much time and effort on our behalf. With the legacy of the Barlup hybrids, this has increased exponentially.

For the 2018-2019 year, the board passed a

resolution for the following:

- 1) Regular rhododendrons sold...grower gets 50% from the sale of the cost of the plant; the club receives the other 50%.
- 2) Barlup hybrids sold...the grower gets 50% from the sale of the cost of the plant, Jim Barlup will receive 1\$ American for each plant sold and the remaining money will be proceeds to the club.

Further discussion ensued about the possible location of a growing-on area at the Horticulture Centre of the Pacific (HCP). This proposal has been approved in principle and is waiting formal approval by the boards at the HCP. The approval should be on the agenda for their March meeting. As well, a Barlup Grove/Garden is also being contemplated in connection with the growing-on area if the board of the HCP approves it. A detailed plan of costs of irrigation and fencing as well as the care of these areas will be forthcoming, as details need to be worked on and presented to the VicRS for approval. This is an ongoing issue and new details will be published next month.

The May truss show will be informal and without judging by a panel of experts. We want to have the same format as last year, where members will receive tokens to vote for their favorite truss. The votes will be counted and a winner in each category will receive a bottle of wine. As part of the "Circle of Learning" at the April meeting, Ken Webb will give a demonstration of truss preparation.

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Notes from the Board

At each meeting, there will be a sheet for members to ask for specific plants to be propagated. As there are fewer and fewer growers of rhododendrons in general, this is an opportunity for our club to lead the way in producing the plants the public wants, and as well, the specific plants rhododendron lovers want to have in their private gardens.

Tony and Carolyn have offered to open their garden at the appropriate time to VicRS members who want to propagate Barlup hybrids for the VicRS. Notice via the newsletter will be given in the fall. As well, they are asking for volunteers to get the plants ready for our sale on April 28, on Friday morning from 10 o'clock, they are asking for help in this matter.



WELCOME JIM AND JUDY BARLUP SPECIAL GUESTS AT OUR APRIL MEETING

The Victoria Rhododendron Society is pleased to welcome the benefactors of our Legacy of Barlup Rhododendrons... **Jim and Judy Barlup**. They are coming to Victoria just in time to be able to attend our April meeting. We welcome them to our group. This is a great opportunity to meet these generous people. On this special occasion, we are having eats and treats after our meeting. Come and join us as we welcome our special guests for the evening.

Epimedium: #2, The Early Days

by Joe Harvey

Dioscorides, 40-90 AD

Plant exploration has gone through many phases. At a stretch it could be said to start with Dioscorides whose book, *De Materia Medica* - Concerning Medical Materials, dealt with about 600 eastern Mediterranean plants and improved on the work of Hippocrates. One plant in it has the name “Epimedium”. We have no idea what it was, but the name was recycled later by Linnaeus. Dioscorides was a Greek, born in what is now Turkey, who worked for the Roman army and became a Roman citizen. His book was a best-seller for 1600 years.

Carl Linnaeus 1707-1778

As a medical student young Linnaeus had to study the big book – Dioscorides; at the same time he took a keen interest in the local Swedish flora and fauna. After a time he said the Swedish equivalent of, “This book is total piffle, none of the plants in it grow in Sweden, and I have found many more than Dioscorides ever did.”

Linnaeus produced a catalogue of all known plants in a book *Species Plantarum* – The Species of Plants, 1753. He also wrote the equivalent on animals and many other books.

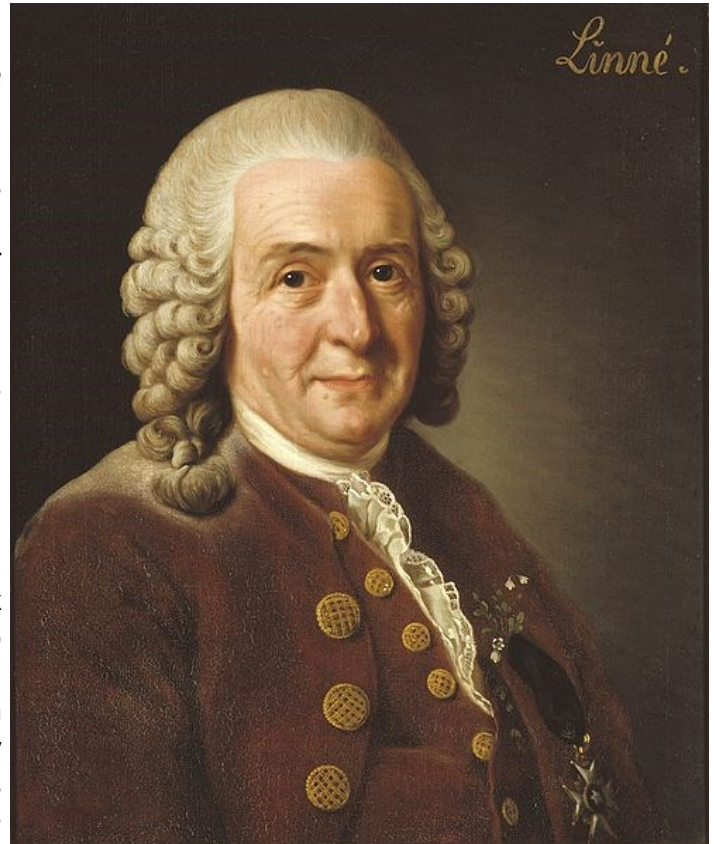
Binomial names

Older herbals had long complicated names for each plant. Sorting out one from another was a major task for Linnaeus. To act as an aide memoire he took to giving each organism a group name, a noun, called the genus name, and then a one-word nickname, an adjective, called the trivial name. This latter usually took some feature about the plant: white flowers might result in the Latin adjective, *albus*, from the Alps, *alpinus* etc. This makeshift system was rapidly adopted for its convenience and was called the Binomial – two-name – system.

Later the rule was adopted that each binomial had to have a preserved specimen called the ‘type’ specimen, which could be referred to, to arbitrate what exactly was meant by the author of the binomial name.

To sum up, we have a total of 1 (one), insignificant plant from the Alps given the binomial *Epimedium alpinum* by Linnaeus in 1753. The type specimen is a dried plant on a sheet of paper in the collection of the Linnaean Society, Burlington House, London, about 200m from Piccadilly Circus.

The next *Epimedium* happened to be from Japan, but was not named until 1830. It was given the binomial *Epimedium grandiflorum*, the big-flowered *Epimedium*. Heck, all the other *Epimediums* have larger flowers than miserable *alpinum*! Bad choice of name but the rule is once published, we keep it. (A similar thing happened to the west coast *Rhododendron*, *R. macrophyllum*, the ‘big-leaved’ *Rhododendron*).



Carl Linnaeus 26 May 1707-10 January 1778

Portrait by Alexander Roslin 1775

Courtesy of Wikipedia

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The Golden Age of Plant Exploration

This covered a period roughly from the latter half of the 19C to WW2. First were the missionaries sent to convert “heathens”. Some were herbalist-scientists studying the works of God. One was **Pere Armand David** sent to China in 1862. He ‘discovered’ the giant panda (the Chinese had been eating them for millennia), and had a deer, squirrel, tree, insects, birds and plants named for him including, in 1885, *Epimedium davidii* – pronounced with a short “a”. But all these plants were sent to Paris as herbarium specimens; in other words, dead as a doornail.

Later collectors, armed with the names and localities from the herbarium collections, were able to search for these plants and collect seeds or bring back living material. Two inventions helped in this: the marine steam engine, reducing travel time, and the Wardian case – a miniature greenhouse.

But the Golden Age was a bust for *Epimediums*; seeds were almost impossible to find and collectors had more spectacular plants in mind – *Rhododendrons*, *Magnolias*, and *Camellias* etc. *Epimedium davidii* did not reach western gardens until Martyn Rix brought it to Europe in 1985; one hundred years after Father David found it.

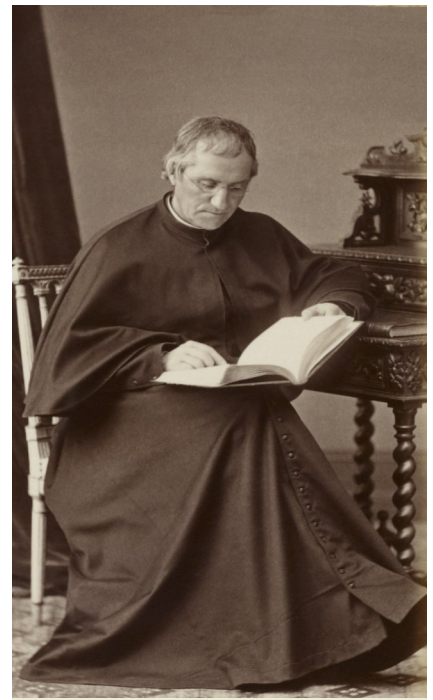
William T. Stearn 1911-2001

Bill Stearn started as a penniless student working in a Cambridge bookshop and went on to become the authority on Botanical Latin, now a recognised language, and the author of the monograph on *Epimedium*. He lived in the Kew but worked at the Natural History Museum in London and would take the Underground after 10am when the fare was reduced. He and I had discussions on Latin on Kew Station but alas not on *Epimedium*. Stearn’s 1938 publication had 21 then known *Epimedium* species and many hybrids.

The Golden Age of *Epimediums*

Bill Stearn spent years revising his earlier publication and the new version came out in 2002, after he died. His book *The Genus Epimedium* has a world total of 54 species of *Epimedium* including 29 from China. The Japanese recognised the garden importance of *Epimedium* long before westerners. One Japanese person in particular, Micorini Ogisu, got interested and made many collecting trips, sharing his specimens with Stearn and contributing living plants to Blackthorn Nursery in Hampshire, now the holder of the National Collection. From North America Darrell Probst also went on trips and probably has the best North American collection at Hubbardston, Mass.

Bill Stearn is dead but new plants are still flooding out of China. Rejoice, we are living in a Golden Age but there is no world expert to analyse them. What to do? Wait for part three.



Armand David 1884
Courtesy of Wikipedia
Commons



Honorable Mention

by Theresa McMillan

On behalf of all the members of the Victoria Rhododendron Society, I would like to thank Calvin Parsons and Lois Blackmore for their service to our club over the years. Together, they spearheaded major changes to the way the club operates during their tenure.

Calvin Parsons is our resident "techie". He designed and is the Webmaster for our website, <http://victoriarhodo.ca>. Being a Webmaster is a skill beyond most of our members. Calvin has worked on other technical problems, setting up the form for Membership lists and keeping track of dues. He uses that list to email the Newsletter to all of us. Calvin was the Registrar for the Victoria Rhododendron Convention in May 2015, another job demanding his time on computers.

He was President from April 2011 to April 2016, and received the ARS Bronze Medal March 2015.

Calvin and Peter Barriscale were responsible for Photography Nights that were held in November, featuring pictures of (what else?) rhododendrons and gardens.

As well, Calvin has been a major contributor in the Legacy garden at the Mary Winspeare Centre in Sidney, and with proposed gardens in Langford, as well as the proposed Norm Todd Propagation Center and Jim Barlup Walk at the Horticultural Centre of the Pacific (HCP).

Calvin has also been a volunteer for years at the rhododendron garden at the HCP with Bill McMillan.

Lois Blackmore was first a Member at Large, then Vice President and then became President of the VicRS in April 2016.

She and her husband, Roy, have a large beautiful rhododendron garden on Triangle Mountain in Langford, which has hosted garden tours many times.

Lois has been very interested in displaying rhododendrons and publicizing them so that the Victorian public can see that not all rhodies are red or pink. During her tenure, our annual show and sale was moved from the Cadboro Bay United Church hall due to rising costs. Lois moved the show to Victoria's Malls. She and her volunteers put in a massive amount of work at Hillside, Tillicum and Westshore Malls to ensure the shows were a success.

In May 2015, at our convention, the 70th ARS Convention in May 2015, we used the Mary Winspear Centre in Sidney for our display of rhododendrons. Since then, the Centre is free to us, so we have continued to use it for the public VicRS flower display in May ever since.

The judged VicRS Truss Show is now done by and for our members.

Lois has also been instrumental in acquiring many plants from Jim Barlup, a major hybridizer from Washington State, and bringing them to Victoria for our sales or for use by our propagation group. We are now the Canadian distributors for the Barlup hybrids and thanks to propagators, Ken and Madeleine Webb and keepers Tony and Carolyn Marquardt provide plants for our own sales.

The VicRS is hugely indebted to both Calvin and Lois for their energy and leadership. We thank them profusely!

A Book Review

Of A New Book In Our Library

Richard Milne's "Rhododendron"

by Theresa McMillan

My husband Bill found a reference to how good Richard Milne's book 'Rhododendron' is, and asked Ellen to order a copy for our library. Since it arrived, he has been using as a source for more updated material for his Rhodos 101 talk.

The Milne book has been sitting on our coffee table, unguarded, so I have been reading it too.

And it **IS** very good! Part of the reason for this is that the author, Richard Milne, is not only a keen field botanist, but has also has an interest in creative writing.

Excellent writing ability is shown in Milne's titles, for example:

- Beauty and Bane (a well-loved beautiful shrub, usually poisonous),
- Sex and the single rhododendron (rhodies will cross naturally with related species nearby), Rhododendromania (the spread of rhododendrons across Europe in the 19th century),
- Glasshouse sensations (vireyas),
- Potions, petals and poisons (the use of rhododendrons in medicines was chancy),
- The tears of the cuckoo (blood, rhododendrons and cuckoos in Chinese folklore),
- Black Sheep: the tale of rhododendron ponticum (invasive rhododendrons in Britain, Ireland and parts of Europe).

New information on the evolution of the ericaceous family (rhododendrons being part of it) has shown fourteen (14) distinct fungal species on the roots of a single rhododendron species in China. Each fungus would deliver different nutrients, especially valuable when nutrients are hard to obtain. Thus, rhododendrons can thrive in poor or acidic soil or even on bare limestone.

Milne is an excellent storyteller. He describes the fate of 1,000 of the Roman general Pompey's soldiers in the Pontic Mountains in Turkey where patches of rhododendrons grow. The men found pots of delicious local honeycombs, apparently left behind as tribute. No one suspected foul play and the soldiers scoffed the lot. It was a fatal mistake. Within hours, they started to feel ill, delirious, hallucinating, vomiting and falling unconscious. The Heptakometes emerged from their hiding places and slaughtered them."

It is hard to believe that our fussy garden rhododendrons that suffer from too basic conditions here could live on limestone cliffs. It is also hard to believe in stories of poisonous honey when we look at beautiful blooming rhododendrons moving to our garden's breezes.



Rhododendron Species Botanical *G*ARDEN

**Annual Symposium
April 6 & 7th , 2018
Everyone Welcome!**

**Location: Best Western Plus, Federal Way,
WA and Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden**

**Featured Speaker: William McNamara,
Executive Director of Quarryhill Botanical Garden**

Information & Registration: www.rhodygarden.org

**Early bird registration is now
through March 9th (\$125.00)
253-838-4646 x 140**





FOR ALL GARDEN LOVERS

[Dinter Nursery](http://www.dinternursery.ca) was a commercial sponsor of our very successful 2015 ARS Convention in 2015. They have now compiled their spring collection of plants, trees and shrubs. We encourage our members to visit their nursery and their website at www.dinternursery.ca. Their nursery can be found at # 1 2205 Phipps Road, Duncan B.C. It is across the road from the Pioneer Restaurant on the Hwy to Duncan.



				
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Denmark	Finland	Germany	Netherlands	Sweden

International Rhododendron Conference
"North America Meets Europe"





 Deutsche
RHODODENDRON-
 Gesellschaft

THE VANCOUVER ISLAND ROCK AND ALPINE GARDEN SOCIETY ANNUAL SPRING FLOWER SHOW



Friday, April 20-1 pm to 8 pm

Saturday, April 21- 9 am to 3 pm

Club Members' Plant Sale -11 am on Saturday

Come to see rock and alpine, succulent, woodland
and wetland plants. There will be plant and seed sales,
door prizes, a silent auction, tea and more!

Cadboro Bay United Church

2625 Arbutus Road, Victoria

Admission by donation

View Royal Garden Club

The View Royal Garden Club will hold its general meeting on Wednesday **March 28 at 7:30 pm** at **Wheley Hall, [500 Admirals Rd](#) in Esquimalt**. **Paul Spriggs** a well known member of VIRAGS & owner of Spriggs Garden Landscaping Company will speak on a self-guided botanical tour he took to the island of Crete. He will focus on how Victoria gardeners can learn from Mediterranean gardens and how they compare with our west coast climate needs.

As well there will be a judged mini show featuring exhibits from members' gardens and a sale of plants and garden items. Visitors and new members are welcome. Drop in fee \$5.00 includes refreshments.

MARS Bus Tour
June 19 and 20, 2018
Surrey, White Rock, Langley and Chilliwack

If you are interested in this tour, please let me know via email soon as possible.
Cheque in the amount of \$80 due at the April 11 meeting of MARS.
lindaderkach@shaw.ca

Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society has arranged a Bus Tour of gardens on the Lower Mainland. The two-day tour includes four private gardens and two public gardens, and possibly a visit to a nursery - time permitting.

Tour Schedule at a Glance

Tuesday, June 19

- Leave QBCC at 6:15 am for the 7:45 Duke Point Ferry
- Visit two private gardens – lunch in a garden provided by our host and MARS
- Visit Darts Hill and The Glades in South Surrey
- Dinner in Langley, BC
- Overnight at the Days Inn, Langley

Wednesday, June 20

- Tour two very large and amazing private gardens in Langley and Chilliwack
- Possible visit to a nursery on the way to the ferry and home.

Cost

- The two-day tour including ferry is \$80 per person, includes Tuesday lunch.
- Our special rate at the Days Inn, Langley is \$119 plus tax, single or double, and includes a delicious cooked breakfast. Reservation information below.
- There will be an additional cost of a bag/box lunch for the second day (less than \$10) and dinner on your own in Langley on Tuesday evening. (I have a list of restaurants.)
- Two of the gardens suggest a donation of \$5 for a tour.
- Our 47-seat bus is 2/3 full. Friends and relatives welcome!

To reserve a room at the Days Inn, Langley, please call 604-539-0100 and ask for the MARS TOUR special rate for Tuesday, June 19. Two queens or King \$119 plus tax. A block of rooms is being held for us until April 28 but best to reserve soon as possible. Cancellation: 24 hours prior

**I will be taking cheques only in the amount of \$80
at the April 11 MARS meeting.**

Update: only 14 seats left

VICTORIA RHODODENDRON SOCIETY BOARD

President

Dean Goard 250-592-6915
deangoard@telus.net or
victoriarhododendron@gmail.com

Vice President

Brenda MacDonald 778-528-3647
macdobr@shaw.ca

Past President

Lois Blackmore 250-478-6615
loisjblackmore@gmail.com

Treasurer

Bill Gordon 250-479-0210
bbgordon@shaw.ca

Secretary:

Sharon Joseph 250-383-1756
undergroundca@yahoo.com

Members-at-Large

Carol Dancer 250-721-5273
dancercarol00@gmail.com

Carolyn Marquardt 250-477-8387
cjmarquardt@shaw.ca

Carrie George 250-642-3176
carrie.g@shaw.ca

Ian Duncan 250-479-0820
duncani@telus.net

Jackie Ralph
jackieralph522@hotmail.ca

Ken Webb 250-744-1785
kenwebb@shaw.ca

Linda Gilmore 250-642-2256
gilmore2080@gmail.com

Lloyd Gilmore 250-642-2256
ll.gilmore@shaw.ca

Lynne Ferrie 250-478-1100
2017gecko@gmail.com

Theresa McMillan 250-478-3515
tkmcmillan@telus.net

KEY CONTRIBUTORS

Membership

Brenda MacDonald 778-528-3647
macdobr@shaw.ca

Newsletter Committee

Bill McMillan 250-478-3515
Joyce Whittle 250-656-7313
Linda Gilmore 250-642-2256
Madeleine Webb 250-744-1785
Theresa McMillan 250-478-3515

Website

Calvin Parsons 250-590-0489
cparsons937@gmail.com
<http://victoriarhodo.ca>

Upcoming Events

2018	Event	Place
Mar 28 7:30	View Royal Garden Club 'Mediterranean Gardens' with Paul Spriggs and Show and Sale featuring members' gardens. Drop in Fee: \$5	Wheeley Hall 500 Admiral Road Esquimalt
Apr 2 7:30	General Meeting - The Couvelier Pavilion 'Circle of Learning' Bring your rhodo questions; share your experiences; it will be learning and fun for all. 	Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road 
Apr 16 7:30	Propagation Group Meeting Call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	TBA
Apr 20-21	Vancouver Island Road and Alpine Society Annual Spring Flower Show @ Cadboro Bay United Church 	2526 Arbutus Road Victoria
Apr 21 TBA	Preparation for Plant Sale - Plant placement and tagging	4640 Cordova Bay Rd Victoria
Apr 22 TBA	OPENING: Greig Species Rhododendron Garden at Milner Gardens & Woodland	2179 W. Island Hwy Qualicum Beach
Apr 28 10:00-4:00	Plant Sale at Marquardt's Farm **One day only** Members Only ==> 10 A.M. - 12 P.M. Public Only ==> 12 P.M. - 4 P.M.	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 http://arsstore.org/ARS2018/ With optional Pre & Post-Tours ranging from ~ May 7 – 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	Sunday VicRS Summer BBQ Picnic at Ken and Madeleine Webbs'	5008 Old W. Saanich Rd. Victoria
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 Milner Gardens History & New Species Garden with Geoff Ball	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