



The Victoria Rhododendron Society Newsletter

4821 Townsend Drive, Victoria, BC V8Z 5P2

March 2018
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Thirty-Eighth Year of Publication
<http://victoriarhodo.ca>

MEETING 7:30

MONDAY, March 5, 2018

**Couvelier Pavilion at the HCP Gardens
505 Quayle Road, VICTORIA, B. C.**

Presentation

**What's Blooming in the Garden
with Carol Dancer**

In This Issue

- ◇ Editor's Notes ----- 2-3
- ◇ Notes from the Board ----- 4
- ◇ New Members----- 5
- ◇ New Jim Barlup Hybrids -----5-10
- ◇ Epimedium #1, by Joe Harvey-- 11-13
- ◇ RSBG Annual Symposium----- 14
- ◇ Dinter Nursery----- 15
- ◇ ARS Convention ----- 15
- ◇ Membership Dues----- 15
- ◇ VIRAGS Annual Spring Show----- 16
- ◇ Upcoming Events ----- 17

REFRESHMENTS

for the next meeting to be provided by:

Joan Gibb

Lloyd & Linda
Gilmore

Dean Goard

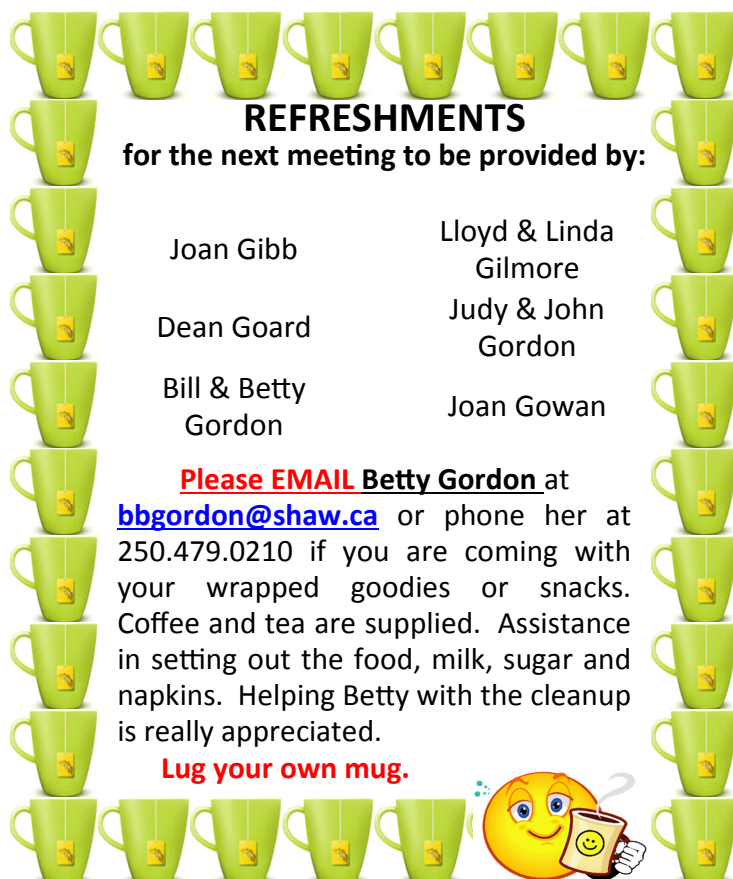
Judy & John
Gordon

Bill & Betty
Gordon

Joan Gowan

Please EMAIL Betty Gordon at
bbgordon@shaw.ca or phone her at
250.479.0210 if you are coming with
your wrapped goodies or snacks.
Coffee and tea are supplied. Assistance
in setting out the food, milk, sugar and
napkins. Helping Betty with the cleanup
is really appreciated.

Lug your own mug.



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Editor's Notes

by Theresa McMillan

Norma Senn - Gardens of Africa



On February 5th Norma Senn, who had been President of our Society a few years ago, gave a well-attended talk on "A Garden Tour of South Africa". The talk and accompanying pictures provided information on an area of the world few of us have ever seen.

There were pictures of garden plants like clivias,



orchids and even one rarity from the desert of Namibia, a 'living fossil' called welwitschia. There was the Makaranga Gardens in Kloof, featuring Zimbabwean Art.

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

Another old South African house and garden, Old Nectar in the Jonkershoek was very striking with its white, red and blue colour. One section of the house's wall had been opened to show its construction, featuring rock, pebbles and dirt all tightly compacted. Most unusual.

Norma and a friend also toured another country in South Africa, Namibia, with its long Atlantic coastline, fantastic desert and immense dunes. It has been called a "country of landscapes."

One of Norma's pictures showed a dune whose structure is shown with a sharp line of sand colour and then black. People were climbing the knife-edge and then sliding down the side.

Namibia also has large wildlife preserves and Norma had several pictures of African wildlife.

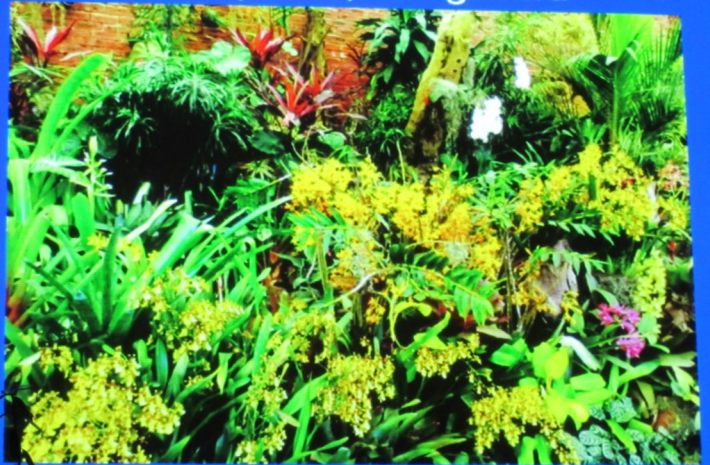


Old Nectar in the Jonkershoek Valley



Garden started in 1941, but
On the grounds of a much
older farm stead

Durban Botanic Garden; over 8000 orchid plants, 75+ genera



Welwitschia



Makaranga Gardens: in Kloof, a private botanic garden



30 acres, includes 18 ponds, streams,
A waterfall



Largest collection of
Zimbabwean art in southern Africa



NOTES FROM THE BOARD February 2018

by Lois Blackmore

The Board was unable to meet in person due to some members being “under the weather”. Communication of important issues were dealt with electronically.

The January board meeting of usual business will be reviewed and reported at the next board meeting. Any new information will be included in the next newsletter. Two new members, Robert Burke and Elizabeth Grant were welcomed at the February General Meeting.

The speaker for our March meeting will be Carol Dancer. Her topic for the evening is What’s Blooming in the Garden.

The March meeting is also the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Victoria Rhododendron Society. Stepping down from the board are Calvin Parsons and Norma Senn. Members who have put forth their names for consideration are as follows:

President	Dean Goard
Vice President	Vacant
Treasurer	Bill Gordon
Secretary	Sharon Joseph
Newsletter Editors	Theresa McMillan, Linda Gilmore
Members at Large	Carol Dancer, Lloyd Gilmore, Carrie George, Carolyn Marquardt, Ken Webb, Ian Duncan

As well, Lynne Ferrie and Jackie Ralph have agreed to put forth their names as members at large. Further nominations, not exceeding two in number, may be accepted from the floor during the AGM.

Voting will be by a showing of hands.



Welcome
New Members
Robert Burke
Elizabeth Grant

New Jim Barlup Hybrids For You To Enjoy





SIMPLY SUNNY



ICICLE CREEK



SUNSET DANCER



SWEET TALK





BEST OF TIMES



SUMMER DREAMS



AMBER GOLD



AUTUMN ORANGE

Epimedium: #1

The Old European Hybrids

By Joe Harvey

I call them Epimedium, an old Greek name but the ancient medicinal use gives us barrenwort, presumably to increase female fecundity and yin yang huo in China. From the curiously curved nectaries that give grace to the flowers, we get bishop's hat, mitrewort, fairywings and best of all, horny goat-weed. Who could resist growing horny goat-weed!



The world of Epimediums is changing rapidly. This is the first of three articles covering the past, the amazing present and a promising future, for what has been until recently a somewhat ho-hum bunch of ground covers.

Why so many hybrids?

The genetic situation in Epimedium not only encourages hybrids but also makes it almost inevitable, human help not needed. This is because almost every species is self-incompatible, that is, pollen will not grow on the stigma of its own flower, or any flower on the same

plant or a clone of it. So an isolated plant is seed sterile.

When a gardener purchases an expensive plant, they tend to get only one. So, in the case of Epimedium this lonely plant will not set seed. But gardeners tend to be obsessive collectors – they want one of each kind! A collection of Epimediums becomes the goal.

If a garden has two species, bees will move pollen from one species to the other. Cross pollination in Epimedium is extraordinary in that there seems to be no barriers to the formation of hybrids and most such pollinations result in viable seed. An example of this occurred at Warley in Essex.

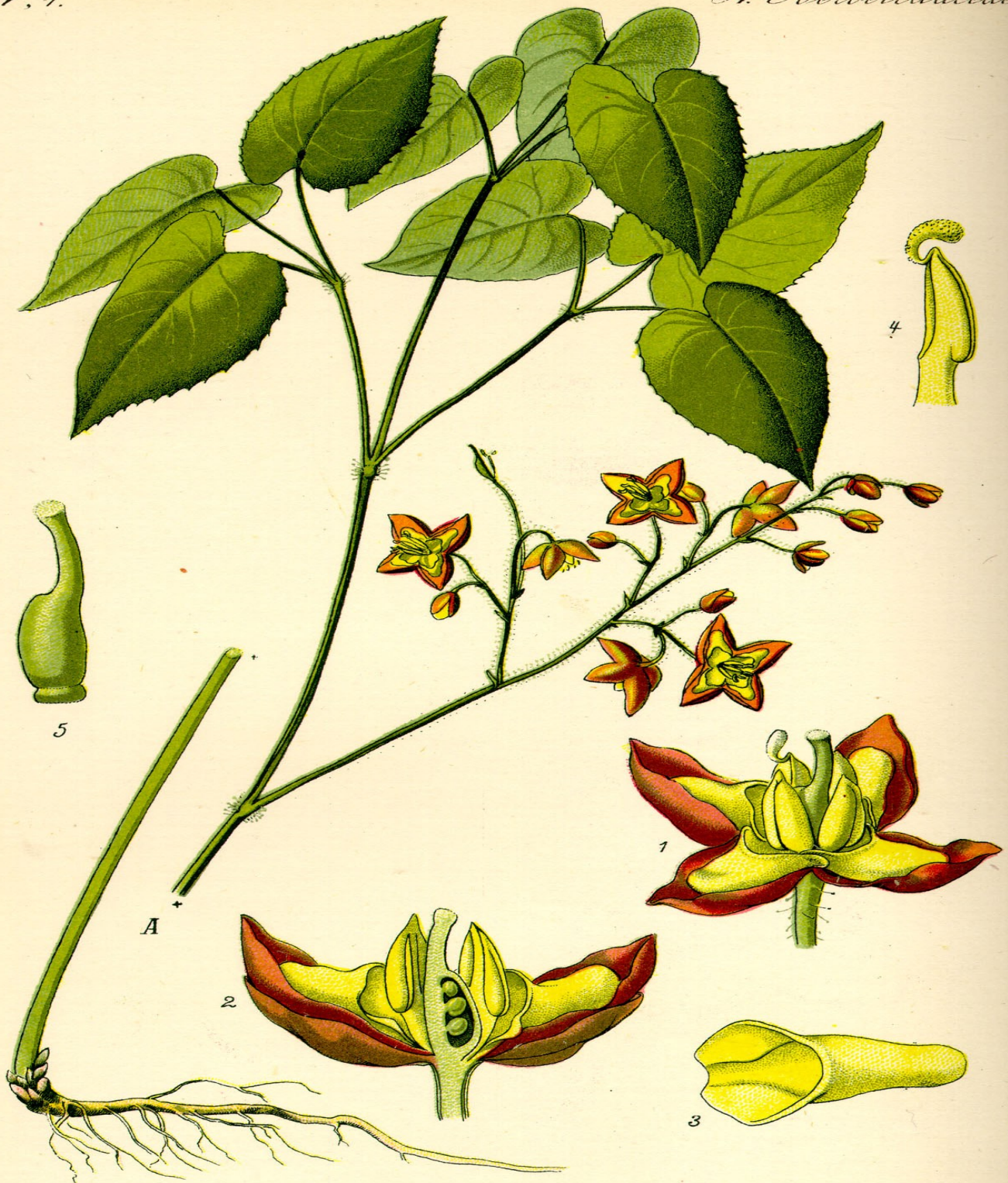
Ellen Ann Willmott

Ellen Willmott, 1858-1934, was a daughter of a well-heeled financier and solicitor who purchased Warley Place, a large house and estate which had already been laid out with avenues by a previous owner, the diarist John Evelyn. Ellen not only inherited the whole estate and money from her father but also was left another fortune by her godmother Countess Tasker. So she decided to devote her life to gardening, no holds barred, purchasing two other estates, one in Italy, one in France. At one time she employed over 100 gardeners.

The garden at Warley

In her huge sunken alpine garden, Miss Willmott planted some Epimediums including *E. alpinum*, a miserable brown-flowered plant from Italy and *E. pinnatum* subspecies *colchicum*, which has gorgeous yellow flowers. Readers may recognise the word *colchicum* as referring to the ancient kingdom of Colchis on the eastern Black Sea. This was where the Argonauts were blown in on a storm, Jason found the

(Continued on page 13)



230. *Epimedium alpinum* L.

Alpen-Sockenblume.



Epimedium x rubrum
Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

(Continued from page 11)

Golden Fleece and married Medea. Gardeners derive the name for the autumn crocus, *Colchicum*, from it and pharmacists the alkaloid colchicine. The marriage did not go well: Jason dumped Medea in Corinth and she killed their children.

Epimedium x warleyensis

The hybrid, which the bees made at Warley, is called *E. x warleyensis* and one selected clone is named 'Ellen Willmott', the flowers are a delightful combination of the pigments of the parent plants, a rich coppery-orange, unusual in *Epimedium*. There is a large patch in the *Rhododendron* grove at Abkhazi Garden.

I shall not give details of the other common hybrids but they include *E. x perralchicum*, with bold yellow flowers, *E. x versicolor* with various clones ranging from mid-yellow to creams and *E. x rubrum*, a deciduous hybrid with crimson-edged young leaves and red flowers.

Garden uses

The slowly spreading rhizomes of these hybrids are both an advantage and a disadvantage. First never buy one; friends will give you a clump and they make an excellent ground-cover in shade under trees and *Rhododendrons*. On the other hand, they can take over and overwhelm more delicate plants. Where these European hybrids have taken over, an almost unique advantage is their ability to tolerate dry shade. In my former Sooke garden the only plants that would grow in shallow, stony, root-filled soil under a beech tree, apart from bluebells and spurge laurel were these old hybrids. In the summer drought on southern Vancouver Island, they are unbeatable.



Epimedium versicolor - May 26, 2010
Courtesy of Meneerke Bloem & Wikimedia Commons



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**





Located 5 km South of Duncan BC on Hwy 1
Phone (250) 748 2023 Email info@dinternursery.ca

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.



International Rhododendron Conference. *"North America Meets Europe"*



Victoria Rhododendron Society **2018 Membership Renewals**

Please contact [Bill Gordon](mailto:Bill.Gordon@vrsociety.org) (250-479-0210) for your membership renewals.

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 Wheeley 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.

Upcoming Events

2018	Event	Place
Feb 19 7:30	Propagation Group Meeting Call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	TBA
Mar 5 7:30	ANNUAL 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 '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 Road Victoria
Apr 22 TBA	OPENING: Greigs Species Rhododendron Garden at Milner Gardens & Woodland	2179 W. Island Hwy Qualicum Beach
Apr 28 10:00-4:00	Plant Sale at Marquardts' 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 VRS 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