



# The Victoria Rhododendron Society Newsletter

4821 Townsend Drive, Victoria, BC V8Z 5P2

May 2018

[tkmcmillan@telus.net](mailto:tkmcmillan@telus.net)

Thirty-Eighth Year of Publication

<http://victoriarhodo.ca>

**MEETING 7:30**

**MONDAY, May 7, 2018**

**Couvelier Pavilion at the HCP Gardens**

505 Quayle Road, VICTORIA, B. C.

**Annual Rhodo Truss Show**

**Bring your trusses for a great show!**

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**Tip:** try the links in blue



**REFRESHMENTS**  
for the next meeting to be provided

Dorothy Griffin	David Gustavson
Edna Hamilton	Radojka & Les Harris
Pamela Harrison	Linda & Joe Harvey

Please EMAIL Betty Gordon at  
[bbgordon@shaw.ca](mailto:bbgordon@shaw.ca)  
or phone 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**



# Upcoming Events

2018	Event	Place
Apr 28 10-2	Plant Sale at Marquardts' Farm <b>**One day only**</b> <b>Featuring Species, Hybrids and including some Jim Barlup hybrids</b>	4640 Cordova Bay Road
May 5 10 - 12	Plant Sale & Garden Open - Evelyn Weesjes last plant sale. Come out early and you will find lots of shrubs, ferns, rhododendros and perennials for sale.	<a href="#">10629 Derrick Rd.</a> <a href="#">North Saanich</a>
May 7 <b>6:00</b>	General Meeting - Truss Show <b>Garden Gates open at 6:00 and Doors open at 7:00</b>	Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road
May 7-30	ARS Convention - <a href="#">North America Meets Europe</a> - May 20-26 <a href="http://arsstore.org/ARS2018/">http://arsstore.org/ARS2018/</a> With optional Pre & Post-Tours ranging from ~ May 7 – 30	Denmark, Finland, Germany, Netherlands and Sweden
May 20 10 - 2	Robin Denning's Brentwood Bay Nursery Pacific Coast Irises, woodlanders, ferns, succulents, geraniums, hardy fuchsias, roses and plants from Abkhazi Gardens. Lots of parking, cheques or cash only please	1395 Benvenuto Ave Brentwood Bay
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'	<a href="#">5008 Old W. Saanich Rd.</a>
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 <b>6:30</b>	<b>Christmas Potluck Dinner - The Couvelier Pavilion</b>	<b>Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road</b>

## 2019

Jan 7 7:30	General Meeting - The Couvelier Pavilion	Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road
Jan 21 7:30	Propagation Group Meeting Call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	TBA
Feb 4 7:30	General Meeting - The Couvelier Pavilion	Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road

## Editor's Notes



by Theresa McMillan

### Report on the Circle of Learning, April 2, 2018

The Couvelier Pavilion at the HCP Gardens was filled with a large circle of chairs for our members in preparation for questions and answers about our growing of rhododendrons.

The meeting was well attended, and the responses were lively.

One thorny problem was the best growing mediums for rhododendrons in pots.

Many members use coarse bark mulch, which provides good drainage and also provides acidic growing conditions.

Another problem was the best medium for growing rhododendrons in the garden.

Answers were as follows:

- coarse bark mulch, rhodos put on top of a pile of it, and roots spread out and covered
- a hole dug, rhodo put in it, roots spread, and coarse bark mulch put around it.
- good drainage is extremely important.
- rhododendrons need to be planted where they get some sun, to promote blooming.

An ongoing problem for members who like to see unmarked rhododendrons leaves is weevil damage.

The notching on the outer edge of the leaves can make the plant unsightly. Many members find making a diluted solution of Lysol with water and pouring on the soil around the rhododendron will get rid of the grubs. Also, members should be sure that rhodo branches don't touch the ground around the plants, for the adult weevils will climb them to reach the leaves.

There were several good conversations between curious beginners and more experienced members. This information will help our favorite plants grow to become even more beautiful.

## Free to a Good Home

Thurston Lacalli has a *Rhododendron bureavii* that he wishes to give away. It is about 4 foot-high and free to a good home. His phone number is (250) 598-9859.

# OUR ANNUAL TRUSS SHOW

## MAY 7



Our truss show takes place at our May meeting, with members being the judges again this year. Each person will be given a bag of beads and will place their bead in the container that he or she thinks is the best truss in that category. The prize for each category will be a bottle of wine.

It is important that the trusses be ready to be placed in the vases available. If one has some of the old ginger beer bottles, then trusses can be prepared at home.

The categories for entries are:

- |                      |                                   |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Red truss         | 12. Largest undamaged leaf        |
| 2. Pink truss        | 13. Indumentum leaf               |
| 3. Orange truss      | 14. Tormentum leaf                |
| 4. Purple truss      | 15. Companion plant               |
| 5. Yellow truss      | 16. Stemmed rhododendron          |
| 6. White truss       | 17. Azalea                        |
| 7. Lavender truss    | 18. Flower arrangement            |
| 8. Multi-color truss | 19. Weevil notched leaf           |
| 9. Speckled truss    | 20. Stemmed unusual foliage rhodo |
| 10. Hammerhead       | 21. Flaccid truss                 |
| 11. Scented truss    | 22. This Bud's 4U – bud and leaf  |



## NOTES FROM THE BOARD April 2018

by Lois Blackmore

We had a successful board meeting, covering many topics from which discussions and decisions were made that will further the efforts of our organization.

The minutes, treasurer's report and membership report were all successfully read, discussed and passed unanimously. We welcome a returning member Tom Grogan.

A discussion was held regarding the format and contents of the VicRS newsletter. Suggestions for improvement included shorter articles of interest, changing the format and discussing the connections that are in the newsletter and have relevance on our website. Further study will be coming over the next many months.

Tony Marquardt, Ken Webb, Ian Duncan and Lois Blackmore met with the director and head gardener of the HCP to discuss the growing on area and possible site for a Barlup Garden or grove. Several sites were explored, with the most agreed upon site being next to the bonsai garden. Further discussion will be needed as the HCP, will at some time, be seeking support to extending the parking area for the garden. Until that meeting occurs, there will be no further meetings with the HCP.

With input from the Marquardts, the VicRS plant sale will be moved forward to April 14. ARS members will have access from 10 am until 12

noon. The public hours are from 12 noon until 2 pm. Several members have been getting the plants tagged, organized and ready for sale. These volunteers are very welcomed and have contributed much to getting everything ready for April 14. A huge thank to these folks for their volunteer efforts on our behalf.

Our truss show will be held at the HCP on the evening of our May meeting. Categories will be the same as last year and the format will be similar. Please have your trusses ready for putting into the containers provided and then placed in the correct category. Our members will do the judging. Each member will receive the correct number of beads as categories, and will vote for the truss that they think best. Winners in each category will receive a bottle of wine.

At the District 1 meeting, a suggestion was made that each chapter in the district contribute monies to the organizing committee of the 2019 fall conference to help pay for speakers. A suggestion of \$1000 from VicRS would be appropriate. However, after discussion amongst the board, it seemed a formal request from the organizing committee would be needed for this to be decided.



## **"I DWELL IN POSSIBILITIES"**



In every human there is a need to know. The questions of who, what, why and how are instinctive and are a force within our very existence. What makes one person search half their lifetime to answer these questions and then to excel in their chosen field of interest?

A very special human has taken these questions and created a plethora of answers.

Your research is groundbreaking, making way for further study.

Your body of work speaks for itself.

Your benevolence is most admirable.

Your friends are worldwide.

You have created an example of a cross-border, cross-country, cross-nation legacy by donating the majority of your creations to the Victoria Rhododendron Society.

You have demonstrated an example of what others can do and follow.

Your gift of graciousness knows no bounds.

The American Rhododendron Society is pleased to present the  
Pioneer Achievement Award

to

**Jim Barlup**



**On April 5, 2018, the Victoria Rhododendron Society was pleased to present the  
Pioneer Achievement Award to  
Jim Barlup.**



## Epimedium #3:

### The Chinese Puzzle

by Joe Harvey

#### Botanical Latin

Bill Stearn, author of the 2002 monograph on *Epimedium*, worked on the manuscript until he died in 2001. A problem with using such books, which are technical manuals not gardening instructions, is that to distinguish between over 50 closely related species, the writer has to use a set of precisely defined nouns and adjectives. The language, Botanical Latin, has evolved over the centuries for this purpose. It is derived from classical Latin and Greek but lacks verbs. By this means exact descriptions can be provided which are internationally understood. The trouble is that to the average reader the text is unreadable. Stearn wrote the standard text, Botanical Latin, on the language and also the delightful Stearns Dictionary of Plant Names for Gardeners. The value of monographs is that they provide the scientific base from which more popular books can be derived, and sure enough, a Kew handbook on *Epimedium* has recently appeared with excellent photographs and very little text.

#### China, the Box of Delights

China was largely closed to western collectors until the end of the Cold War, 1989. I gather that Bill Stearn never got to China and for his book, he relied on the published Chinese accounts for some species plus cultivated specimens, especially those in Blackthorn Nursery, Hampshire and photographs supplied by people who visited the natural habitats of the species. What could not be anticipated was that material continued to flood out of China after his book was published, some of this has been misidentified and some is entirely new to science. There is now no expert to help or to revise the monograph. I can illustrate the problem by reference to a group of *Epimediums*, which have particularly long leaflets.



*Epimedium Wushanense Caramel*

*(Continued on page 8)*

## **Epimedium wushanense**

Ying Tsun-Shen was given the task of surveying the Chinese species of *Epimedium* for the Flora of China and published his conclusions in 1975. Included was the new long-leaved species *E. wushanense*. The name comes from Wushan, named for the Wu Mountains in Sichuan. These mountains are divided by three steep gorges carved by the Yangtze; these give the name, the Three Gorges. Over the past couple of decades collectors have brought back *Epimedium* specimens and it was perfectly natural to name plants with the characteristically elongated leaflets, as 'wushanense', especially if they came from the region, no deception intended. These plants are now in the nursery trade.

I accessed photographs of *Epimedium wushanense* on the internet – a more disparate set of plants it would be hard to find, especially ones from the UK. As expected, they had uniformly elongated leaflets although one had sharp points and had been named 'Spiny-leaf'. Where they differed most was in flowers and panicles: some had short panicles with the flowers crowded together, others had extremely large diffuse panicles with the flowers widely separated.

In Stearn's book *E. wushanense* is illustrated with two photographs provided by the ultra-keen Japanese collector Mikonori Ogisu. Page 104 shows a compact form and 105 is of a diffuse one. It did strike me that as a taxonomist of little standing these two plants could easily be different species but which one is *wushanense*? Fortunately, science is a self-correcting system and the use of a particular name is governed by a set of rules, which require each name to have a 'type' specimen designated. This specimen has to be deposited in an accredited institution for resolving any dispute that arises over use of the name.

## **Reappraisal of wushanense**

Ying deposited a set of type specimens in the Beijing Herbarium, seven plants in all. Recently a group of botanists, Zhang et al, decided to examine what was in the folder. Fortunately, one had been labelled 'holotype', which means the unique specimen to which the name *wushanense* is attached. So we know exactly what the name *wushanense* applies to and no, I have not seen it. What were the others?

Work since 1975 had shown that there are four species with similar elongated leaflets. The shocker was that of among Ying's collection were three of these four:

(Continued on page 9)



(Continued from page 8)

illicifolium (the holly-leaved Epimedium, from Ilex the holly); jingchenshanense (a new species, the Jingchen Mountain Epimedium) and of course wushanense. The other member of the elongated leaflet group is pseudowushanense (the false Wu Mountain Epimedium). My suspicion is that what the English call 'spiny-leaf' is E. illicifolium. The others may be floating around in various nurseries, labelled as wushanense.

### **Darrell Probst and the Giant**

Darrell is a keen nurseryman and collector based in Hubbardston, Mass. On a trip in 2001 he brought back one piece (remember plants are self-incompatible) of an Epimedium from Wushan and grew it in a greenhouse. To his surprise, it hit the roof, well not quite, but at nearly 2m when staked up (they droop gracefully), it far exceeded any other known species. So he called it 'The Giant' as a nickname until some scientist could give it a binomial.

The Giant is a tight clumper, lacking any horizontally spreading rhizomes. This is both good and bad: Good in that it will not take over your garden in a slow wave like the old hybrids, bad in that it is slow to propagate. I might have got the first specimen on Vancouver Island, it is a slow grower and to split it I had to saw it with an

old bread knife. For a nurseryman with a super-desirable new introduction this must be a frustration, the initial release plants sold for \$500. And is The Giant one of the already described species? I don't know, but it is going to revolutionise our concept of Epimedium as a garden plant.

I had intended to write only three articles but, despite underwhelming requests, I plan to devote another to The Giant because it has such fun genetics. Meanwhile if you have a plant labelled Epimedium wushanense, put a question mark after the name.



Epimedium Wushanense Caramel



## My Three Favourite Rhodos

by Bill Gordon

**M**y three favourite rhodos are, like many of us know, the three currently in bloom.

Aside from that consideration it is the story behind the plant. The first plant pictured (1130054) is *R. floribundum* (species) which now dwarfs everything around it. I had admired the plant in Norman Todd's garden and he had



another planted out at his nursery, Firwood , which we dug out. I proceeded to site it in the wrong location twice before it's present placement. When this plant finally bloomed I entered it in the annual truss display against the only other one (Norm's) . Every year we would joke about how the judges favoured his because of his status in the club.

(1130054) is *R. floribundum* (species)

*(Continued on page 11)*



(Continued from  
page 10)



Pictured  
(1130066) is  
*R. augustinii*,  
U.B.C. form  
(species). The  
snows that  
came in  
December  
1996 broke  
records in  
the Victoria

(1130066) is *augustinii* form (species) from U.B.C.  
shown directly behind Bill Gordon

area and damaged many plants. This plant was snapped off at the ground level. When the snow melted the plant was severed off at approximately one inch above the ground. I did not think it would survive. The plant not only survived but cast seed into moss in the surrounding area in the summer of 2014 and quite a number of sports have survived and are potted on.

(Continued on page 12)



(Continued from page 11)

The plant (1130067) is a cross by club member Joe Harvey. I believe Joe gave it to us when he was moving out of his Sooke property. Everyone knows that Joe propagates for foliage not



(1130067) is a cross by club member Joe Harvey bloom. When this plant bloomed we enjoyed the colour and shape of the truss and look forward to it every spring. Ask Joe about it at a meeting, he will likely talk about the foliage.



## VICTORIA RHODODENDRON SOCIETY BOARD

### President

Dean Goard 250-592-6915  
[deangoard@telus.net](mailto:deangoard@telus.net) or  
[victoriarhododendron@gmail.com](mailto:victoriarhododendron@gmail.com)

### Vice President

Brenda Macdonald 778-528-3647  
[macdobr@shaw.ca](mailto:macdobr@shaw.ca)

### Past President

Lois Blackmore 250-478-6615  
[loisjblackmore@gmail.com](mailto:loisjblackmore@gmail.com)

### Treasurer

Bill Gordon 250-479-0210  
[bbgordon@shaw.ca](mailto:bbgordon@shaw.ca)

### Secretary:

Sharon Joseph 250-383-1756  
[undergroundca@yahoo.com](mailto:undergroundca@yahoo.com)

### Members-at-Large

Carol Dancer 250-721-5273  
[dancercarol00@gmail.com](mailto:dancercarol00@gmail.com)

Carolyn Marquardt 250-477-8387  
[cjmarquardt@shaw.ca](mailto:cjmarquardt@shaw.ca)

Carrie George 250-642-3176  
[carrie.g@shaw.ca](mailto:carrie.g@shaw.ca)

Ian Duncan 250-479-0820  
[duncani@telus.net](mailto:duncani@telus.net)

Jackie Ralph  
[jackieralph522@hotmail.ca](mailto:jackieralph522@hotmail.ca)

Ken Webb 250-744-1785  
[kenwebb@shaw.ca](mailto:kenwebb@shaw.ca)

Linda Gilmore 250-642-2256  
[gilmore2080@gmail.com](mailto:gilmore2080@gmail.com)

Lloyd Gilmore 250-642-2256  
[ll.gilmore@shaw.ca](mailto:ll.gilmore@shaw.ca)

Lynne Ferrie 250-478-1100  
[2017gecko@gmail.com](mailto:2017gecko@gmail.com)

Theresa McMillan 250-478-3515  
[tkmcmillan@telus.net](mailto:tkmcmillan@telus.net)

## Key Contributors

### Membership

Brenda Macdonald 778-528-3647  
[macdobr@shaw.ca](mailto: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](mailto:cparsons937@gmail.com)  
<http://victoriarhodo.ca>



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