



THE MARCH 2019 EDITION
RHODOTELLER

www.nirrhodos.ca

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RHODODENDRON SOCIETY
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MARCH 2019

COMING EVENTS

5th March 2019 -- Executive meeting

This month's meeting will be held at the home of our Publicity Co-ordinator Helena Zukowski.

The meeting will start at **10 a.m.**

12th March 2019 -- Regular meeting

Now this is an exciting, do not miss presentation. Ole Jonny Larsen will be flying in from his home in Norway to deliver talks to each one of our Island Chapters. Our presentation is entitled "**Plant Hunting, the Experience of an Amateur**". See inside for full details.

The North Island Rhododendron Society meets at 7:30 p.m. the second Tuesday of each month (except May through August) at the United Church in Comox.

PRESIDENT'S

NOTES

Unfortunately, it seems my hopes for an early spring have been completely dashed. This prolonged period of cold weather is quite unusual. The saddest looking plants in my garden right now are the Hellebores. Before the cold they were in full beautiful bloom. Now they are hanging down, flowers looking quite ruined. Will they recover when it warms up? Time will tell.

Since gardening is temporarily off my list of activities, I have more time to read about plants, Rhododendrons in particular. I recently discovered online "Rhododendrons International, The Online Journal of the World's Rhododendron Organizations". This journal is edited by Glen Jamieson. The articles are quite scientific in nature. I admit much what is written is beyond my understanding. However, the Journal is well worth reading and I was able to glean some interesting info.

Chapter One, in volume 3, part one describes how researchers, in collaboration with the ARS, are using the Genus Rhododendron as a model study system in biology. Scientists from all over the world will study rhododendrons to gain insight about a wide range of biological processes. This article is very readable and interesting. To find these journals on line Google 'rhododendron.org' which takes you to the ARS website; then look under the header 'Resources' and finally click on 'Rhod.Internat'l'.

Another interesting chapter is on "A Mechanistic Understanding of Winter Hardiness in Rhododendrons". Considering our weather lately, I thought this is worth reading. In this article I came across the term "Thermonasty". Sounds nasty. All our Rhodos have been exhibiting thermonasty lately. Thermonasty refers to "temperature induced leaf movements". In other words, the rhodo leaves are curled and hanging down because it is cold! The article goes on to explain that thermonastic leaf movements helps the plant avoid high light stress.

There is always something new to learn as gardeners, and in the study of horticulture, two reasons why I love it.

Since last month's meeting was cancelled due to snow, it will be great to get together again to enjoy each other's company and share goodies and coffee. On March 12th the Program Committee has lined up a very special speaker, Ole Jonny Larsen from Norway. This will be an exciting informative meeting, not to be missed!

See you at the Church Hall, March 12th at 7pm.

Maureen

COMMITTEE REPORTS

MEMBERSHIP

Nadine Boudreau

With the cancellation of the February meeting, we have no new members to report. We have a total of 79 memberships for 2019 thus far.

The ARS Winter Journal has been sent out. It always has great articles on Rhododendrons and interesting to learn about what others are growing and experiencing around North America and beyond. This issue features the Species Garden that is being developed at Milner gardens. Our club has not only supported the project financially but also many have volunteered with the hands-on work. Check out the picture of the dedication ceremony on page 15 to see many of our club members. If you find that you would prefer to read your journal online instead of receiving a paper copy, please let us know at the membership table and we will forward the request to the ARS. The little membership booklet has instructions on how to access the ARS Journal online on page 13.

I also want to remind you that you are welcome to bring a guest along to the meetings at no charge. Many of us came to the meetings as a guest, enjoyed the meetings and fellow members so much that we became members. We try to make the meetings fun and informative. Sharing and learning from others about our experiences with plants and gardens is what makes us better gardeners!

THE RHODO GARDEN

Maureen Denny



Due to snow the Work Party in February was cancelled. Hopefully the weather will warm up. The next Work Party is planned for March 14th at 10 am. Bring your tools -- pruners, loppers, rakes and buckets.

Goodies are always appreciated.

WAYS & MEANS

Claudia Ellis

OUR RAFFLE RHODOS THIS MONTH ARE:

'Hello Dolly' 3', -23°C. Another outstanding hybrid by Halfdan Lem. Yellow flowers brightened with tones of orange and rose. Large calyx. Rounded plant with medium green leaves and lt. beige indumentum.

'Lord Roberts' 5', -26°C. Vigorous, rounded, upright plant. Glossy green foliage. Flower deep red with black blotch.

OUR DOOR PRIZE IS:

Azalea 'Blue Danube' 2', -20°C. Intense large violet-blue flowers with deeper purple-red spotting.



'Hello Dolly'



'Lord Roberts'



Azalea 'Blue Danube'

Help Wanted

Claudia needs an assistant at the Ways & Means table for the March and April meetings.

Easy job and a super way to meet the other members of our club.

Give Claudia a call at 250-702-1416 or just report for duty at the next meeting.

Yearbooks Ready for Members

Dave Godfrey

Unfortunately, due to the cancellation of our February meeting because of the weather, we missed an opportunity to distribute the 2019 Yearbooks to those members in attendance. Hopefully, we will see many of our members at the March 12th meeting where they can pick up their booklets.

There are a couple of corrections to be made to the booklets. Associate members Christine & Philip Aldred's phone number is 250-951-0484... NOT 651. Also, Sue Grant and Garth Wedemire have new cell phone numbers. Garth can be reached at 250-331-1122, while Sue at 250-331-1013.

Karin Franzen's postal code has a typo error and should read V9N 1A3. Sorry for any inconveniences.

Need a ride to one of our meetings?



Call Sue at 250-331-1013
or send her an email at grant.sk@gmail.com

THE PROGRAMME

MARCH 2019



Ole Jonny Larsen and his wife Kari live in Ålesund on the west coast of Norway. He is newly-retired after teaching physics for 41 years in a Norwegian state school.

Jonny has been on the board of the Norwegian Rhododendron Society for seven years, and leader of the society since 2016. A prolific writer, he has authored two books titled *Rhododendrons in Norway* (2011) and *The Great Planthunters* (2008) and has edited a book about Rhododendron gardens in Norway. Over the years, he has written several articles for the American Rhododendron Society (ARS) Journal, the Rhododendron Species Foundation (RSF) yearbook, the Royal Horticultural Society, Rhododendron, Magnolia and Camellia yearbook, as well as articles for magazines of Scandinavian Rhododendron Societies.

He is often invited as a speaker for Rhododendron society meetings in Norway, Sweden and Denmark, and was one of the keynote speakers at the ARS May, 2018 convention in Bremen, Germany.

Jonny manages a small "backyard" nursery which produces one of the largest Rhododendron species collections in Norway (and Scandinavia), for which he is currently the main supplier.

He has participated in three plant hunting expeditions to Yunnan and Sichuan, China and he will be our guest speaker for the March 12th meeting.

A NOTE FROM THE VANCOUVER CHAPTER

*by Kirsten Martin, Erica Enterprises
and President of the Vancouver Rhododendron Society*

(Ed: this article was written by Kirsten in early February.)

BRRR!!!!!! As I type, the snowflakes are once again beginning to fall. What a completely frigid turn of events we have had this winter. The nursery has taken a hard hit: The December storm left us without power for four and a half days and ripped a wall completely off one of the greenhouses. We had a number of large trees come down and completely demolish the power lines. This second storm once again ripped the already fragile greenhouse wall apart and we had no power and no water at the nursery- this has fortunately been resolved. We are now preparing for an exceptionally busy, bustling, spring.

Braving the cold in the garden today are: beautiful Hellebores¹ and Cyclamens², completely unaware of the brutal weather; Hamamelis³ and Viburnum bodnantense Rose Dawn⁴ with their elixir-like fragrances; as well as, winter heathers⁵ and Skimmia⁶ which always cheer up the garden with colour on these dark winter days.



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



Fritillaria michailovskyi

FRIDAY, APRIL 5 - 1 PM TO 8 PM
SATURDAY, APRIL 6 - 9 AM TO 3 PM
PUBLIC SALE OF MEMBER DONATED PLANTS-
11 AM 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

Visit our website at www.virags.com
Or find us on facebook at vancouver island rock and alpine garden society

THE RHODO IN THE BANNER



R. 'OLIVE'

(Both photos from hirsutum.com)



We always rave about how some rhodos bloom so early but, of course, in this climate blooming early has its hazards. Mainly frost. I was speaking recently with Brian and Barb Staton who have a large, mature, R. 'Olive' growing in front of their house. Just as it started to bloom in early February, it was whacked by Mother Nature.

The hybridizer of 'Olive' in 1939 was Sir John Stirling-Maxwell, and four years earlier he produced 'Jock' another beautiful rhododendron. Four registered rhodos and two of them are 'Olive' and 'Jock'?

That's the very definition of success!

**SPRING SUNDAYS
AT
VIU'S MILNER GARDENS AND WOODLAND**

Sundays February 3rd to March 24th

Enjoy the early Spring bulbs in this peaceful setting.

Garden open 11:00am to 3:30pm, last entry 3:00pm.

Tea Room open 11:00am for tea, soup and scones with last seating 3:00pm.

Admission adults \$6, youth \$4 includes tax. Children 12 and under accompanied by an adult free.

P.S.

1. An important reminder -- We are still looking for gardens of interest in the Courtenay area to showcase for our Annual Mother's Day Garden Tour on Sunday, May 12th. If you would like your garden, or know of one for consideration, please contact Noni Godfrey, Maureen Denny, or Carolyn Chester. (Phone numbers and email addresses can be found in the NIRS 2019 Yearbook).
2. When (or should that be "IF") spring finally arrives, don't forget to pot up any perennials, or other companion plants, for the NIRS table at our plant sale on Sunday, April 28th.
3. For those members who plan to submit garden photos for the Photo Night program next January, a **REMINDER THAT WINTER OFFICIALLY ENDS ON MARCH 21ST**. Please forward your winter garden photos via email to Garth Wedemire with the subject title **"NIRS Photo Night"**.

Good Gardening and I'll see you at the Church Hall on 12th March 2019.