



The Victoria Rhododendron Society Newsletter

4821 Townsend Drive, Victoria, BC V8Z 5P2

November 2019
tkmcmillan@telus.net

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

General Meeting
MONDAY, November 4, 2019 starts at 7:30
Couvelier Pavilion at the HCP Gardens
505 Quayle Road, VICTORIA, B. C.

Lois Blackmore - Singapore

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REFRESHMENTS

by

Robert Burke &
Elizabeth Grant

Lynn Collicutt

Jan Dammel

Carol & Bill Dancer

Heather Dickman

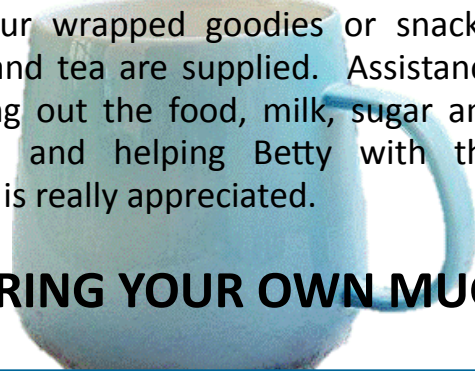
Meredith Dickman

PLEASE EMAIL Betty Gordon at
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, and helping Betty with the cleanup is really appreciated.



BRING YOUR OWN MUG



Upcoming Events

2019	Event	Place
Nov 4 7:30	General Meeting - The Couvelier Pavilion	Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road
Nov 18 7:30	Propagation Group Meeting Call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	TBA
Dec 2 6 pm	Christmas Potluck Dinner	Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road
Jan 6 7:30	General Meeting - The Couvelier Pavilion	Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road
Jan 20 Noon	Propagation Group Meeting Call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	TBA
Feb 3 7:30	General Meeting - The Couvelier Pavilion	Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road
Feb 17 7:30	Propagation Group Meeting Call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	TBA
Mar 9 7:30	General Meeting - The Couvelier Pavilion	Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road
Mar 23 7:30	Propagation Group Meeting Call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	TBA
Apr 6 7:30	General Meeting - The Couvelier Pavilion	Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road
Apr 12 TBA	PLANT SALE	TBA
Apr 20 7:30	Propagation Group Meeting Call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	TBA
Apr 29- May 3	<u>ARS Annual Convention - 75th Anniversary</u>	Portland, Vancouver, WA
May 4 7:30	General Meeting - The Couvelier Pavilion	Gardens at HCP 505 Quayle Road
May 10 TBA	PLANT SALE	TBA
May 18 7:30	Propagation Group Meeting Call Ken Webb 250-744-1745	TBA

President's Remarks, November 2019

Put aside your extensive research into political platforms and party leader qualifications. It is time to concentrate on all things rhododendron.

Membership Renewals

The leaves are colouring and falling – it must be Membership Renewal Time!

Our annual fees for 2020 remain the same as the past few years:

- Full Membership (including ARS Journal) \$35.00
- Local Membership (without the ARS Journal) \$25.00
- Associate Membership (primary member of another ARS Chapter) \$10.00

I believe that most of our members are aware that the Victoria Rhododendron Society has been subsidizing the actual cost of Full Membership for a number of years now. Within the past couple of years, the ARS increased their annual membership fee to \$40.00 USD. This is effectively \$53.00 CAD, so that VicRS subsidizes each full member by \$18.00.

At our last executive meeting, we did reluctantly agree that fiscal responsibility dictates the club reduce the amount of the membership subsidy.

Membership fees for 2021 will be \$45.00; **however**, this year we will all still get the full reduction.

In addition, remember that all those renewing before November 30 will be eligible for a draw for free membership next year – the ultimate subsidy: 100%!

Soliciting for Members

As you know, the Executive members are always seeking ways to increase public awareness of our club and widen our appeal to new members. As part of this continuing out-reach program we will be awarding all graduates of the Pacific Horticultural College a free Local Membership to the Victoria Rhododendron Society. On behalf of the club, Ian Duncan will be making the presentations of a membership card and a copy of both *A Rhesplendence of Rhododendrons* and *The Complete Wit and Wisdom of Norman Todd* at the graduation ceremony in November.

Gorge Park Redux

Esquimalt Parks have done more work on the VicRS/Barlup rhododendron garden at Gorge Park. They have opened up further space closer to the Japanese Garden.

Everybody is invited to a mini plant-in on Saturday, October 26, at 9:30. BYOS (Bring Your Own Shovel)

The days cool and the rain falls. Time to get out there and move around all those things that you discovered in the summer that were apparently and shortsightedly planted in the wrong spot.

Hope to see you at the November meeting, when our own Lois Blackwell will talk to us about what a visit to Singapore looks like. There will be plants, there will be culture, there will be colour and interest. Do come!

Happy gardening -

Brenda Macdonald

Editor's Notes

by Theresa McMillan

Lloyd gave us an up-close and personal presentation of the many challenges of a hybridizer. Decreasing property size, changing property cost and peoples' preferences have greatly contributed to the specific features he wants in his hybrids. The specific features are as follows:

- good leaf with indumentum
- small compact plants
- fragrance
- large calyx
- colour

Lloyd described some of the disappointments along the way. However the pursuit of developing a unique rhodo can be rewarding. It only requires research and patience, patience, patience.



Jeda x sanguineum:-

X Rubicon pollen, X Carmen pollen, X Everred Pollen, X Fireman Jeff pollen, X Black Widow pollen, X Cherries and Merlot pollen and the cross Wanna Bee X the pictured plant



(Party Orange x Parksville Sunset) scented white crossed with Dexter's Peppermint pollen x self pollen x (Jeda x R. sanguineum ssp hemalum)

Editor's Note – several years ago Bill and I visited Stuart Holland's large mature garden in Oak Bay. He pointed out a large big leafed rhododendron from the Himalayas that had taken 27 years to bloom and when it did, he disliked the flowers.

NOTICES

POTS

From Lynne Ferrie

Do you need POTS?

If you are in need of extra pots, Lynne Ferrie has an assortment of them in her carport and she can even drop off pots if needs be. Contact Lynne Ferrie - 250-478-1100

R. PINK PEARL From Dean Gourd

Pink Pearl

Dean Gourd is looking for this rhodo for a neighbour. If you can help Dean in his quest, please contact him at deangoar@telus.net.

RHODODENDRONS FOR SHADE

RHODODENDRONS FOR SHADE

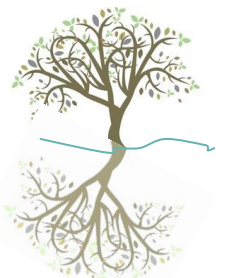
Thank you to **Steve Henning** and his website <http://rhodyman.net/rhodynsh.php#anchorSR> for the following:

Hybrid Rhododendrons for Shade

- [Black Satin \(PJM\)](#)
- [Boule de Neige](#)
- [Bow Bells](#)
- [Desmit \(PJM\)](#)
- [Elite \(PJM\)](#)
- [Elviira](#)
- [Henry's Red \(PJM\)](#)
- [King George](#)
- [Low Red Frilled \(PJM\)](#)
- [Molly Fordham \(PJM\)](#)
- [Nova Zembla](#)
- [Olga Mezzitt \(PJM\)](#)
- [Ramapo](#)
- [Red River](#)
- [Regal \(PJM\)](#)
- [Snowlady](#)
- [Victor \(PJM\)](#)
- [Weston's Pink Diamond \(PJM\)](#)

Rhododendron Species for Shade

- [Rhododendron catawbiense](#)
- [Rhododendron minus](#)
- [Rhododendron calendulaceum](#)
- [Rhododendron canescens](#)
- [Rhododendron kiusianum](#)
- [Rhododendron schlippenbachii](#)



American Rhododendron Society
 75th Anniversary
20/20
VISION
 ARS75.org
Looking forward, reflecting back
Portland-Vancouver, April 29-May 3, 2020



You're invited to the celebration!



World-renowned Keynote Speakers
 Kenneth Cox • Jens Nielsen • Steve Hootman • Juliana Medeiros
 Lionel de Rothschild • Steve Krebs • Valerie Soza • & more!

**Tours to the Northwest's
 Outstanding Gardens & Nurseries**

**April 29-May 3, 2020, Hosted by ARS District 4
 Heathman Lodge, Vancouver, WA.**

20/20 Vision international speakers to include:

- Kenneth Cox from Glendoick in Scotland
- Lionel de Rothschild from Exbury in England
- Jens Nielsen, plant explorer from Denmark
- Steve Krebs and Juliana Medeiros from the Holden Arboretum
- Steve Hootman from the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden
- Valerie Soza from the University of Washington
- and more.

Garden tours to include:

- Crystal Springs Botanical Garden
- Cecil & Molly Smith Garden
- Portland Japanese Garden
- Lan Su Chinese Garden
- Iseli Nursery
- Woodburn Nursery
- The Stewart Garden (formerly Dover Nursery)
- Sebright Gardens

Plant sale, photo contest, poster session, special clinics, plus:

Around the Sound pre-tour
Willamette Valley and Oregon Coast Excursion post-tour

ars75.org

Registration opens December 2, 2019

POLYPLOID RHODODENRONS IN JOSSELIN FRANCE

By Lois Blackmore



Marc Colombel has been working with polyploid rhododendron plants for several years. He began collecting cuttings when hybridizers from the US and England sent him cuttings of plants that had been identified by the University of Cumbria in Portugal as true polyploids. Polyploid rhododendrons are plants that have more than two sets of chromosomes in their cells, resulting in bigger and longer lasting flowers. His project is safeguarding the first polyploids discovered in England and the US. Polyploidy has been known to exist since the mid 1950's. Marc's goal is to establish a genetic bank for future research.

The Rhododendron Conservatory is in the French community of Josselin. Josselin is located in the Morbihan District of Brittany in northwestern France. Josselin has preserved its heritage and is known for its medieval houses and fortress type castle. It is this municipality that accepted the gifts of polyploid rhododendrons. Through his friendship with Christian Hays, they convinced the Mayor of Josselin, Joseph Seveno, that such a project would be feasible and would add to the beauty of the city.



Following the delivery of many donations from Marc, who started collecting in 2011, a date was set for "The inauguration of the Conservatoire des Rhododendrons Polyploids". His goal of establishing a gene pool for other hybridizers and scientists to explore and study polyploidy in rhododendrons was now becoming a reality.



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The display pays honour to the first missionaries who discovered the genus rhododendron in their mission to bring Christianity to the native peoples of Asia and India. This display is called Ancient Explorers. The early pioneers are honoured as well as true rhododendron plant hunters. The other displays are categorized under Modern Hybridizers.



On May 3, 2014, the official opening of the “Conservatoire des rhododendrons polyploides” took place.



Special guests included Christian Hays, Alain Hivert and Joseph Seveno, mayor of Josselin. A welcomed and special guest included Mr. Josselin de Rohan, owner of the castle and owner of the rhododendron “Chateau de Rosselin, created by Marc in 2006.

Joe's Jottings, miscellaneous thoughts from a life with plants

By Joe Harvey

#1: The Big Bang Tree – The Mount Etna Broom

If you want a bombproof tree, including having gobbets of hot lava thrown in its direction, this is the tree for you! The Mount Etna Broom grows on the flanks of its namesake volcano as well as elsewhere in Sicily and also on Sardinia.

Even away from the most active volcano in Europe, Sicily is hot and dry in the summer but once this tree gets its roots deep enough, it becomes drought proof.

I only noticed the 20ft specimen on my street because a delightful gardenia-like scent followed me for half a block. This was in July and, looking up, I could see the mass of bright yellow flowers overtopping the other bushes and trees. It had been planted years ago when gardener Liz Keays lived there.

Let me put to rest one possible problem: the word 'broom'. It may have been causing you heart palpitations but no, this is not a major pest-in-the-making like Scotch broom introduced in Sooke in 1850 by Captain Walter Colquhoun Grant and now a problem all the way to California. Scotch broom is *Cytisus scoparius*. Mount Etna broom is a *Genista*, - *G. aetnensis*, the species name derived from the Latin for Mount Etna. It does not spread by seed in Victoria except deliberately by human hand.

Another *Genista*, dyers' greenweed, is famous for supplying a surname when Geoffrey of Anjou plucked a sprig in the 1170's, stuck it into his hat and thence became known as Geoffrey Plantagenet, from 'Planta genista'. His son, Henry, II started the Plantagenet dynasty in England, which ended with Richard III looking for a horse, any horse apparently, on Bosworth Field, thus ending the Middle Ages and giving Shakespeare the opportunity to write a scurrilous play about him. Dyers' greenweed does well in Victoria, but grows only inches high as a spreading evergreen with yellow flowers in late spring.

The advantages of Mount Etna broom are many. It can grow in really barren, sandy or rocky dry soils; the only thing it dislikes is wet waterlogged site. There are no leaves to sweep up since photosynthesis is taken over by the green twigs, which, in turn, cast only a light shade permitting under planting with bulbs or perennials.

Now I mentioned that the particular specimen I saw was about 20 ft. tall. Maybe you don't have the space for a tall tree (it is old), so just pretend you are providing accommodation like infamous hotelier Procrustes, swing that axe and make your tree fit your bed – it will love you. *Genistas* adapt well to pruning.

I should mention that the flowering period fills the gap following spring when few trees blossom. Depending on the season, flowering begins in late June, continues all July and ends sometime in August, depending on the heat. And did I mention that the roots fix nitrogen? This tree has everything

(Continued on page 10)



Etna broom tree growing on Mount Etna (recent larva flow visible above and right of tree)
Sept 27, 2007 - Author : Velela

(Continued from page 9)

The Big Bang Tree – The Mount Etna Broom- cont'd

going for it. So why is it rare?

Human Foibles

The problem is with humans. You see, we like to see plants in flower before we buy them – but we don't shop for plants in July – so we don't see it in flower – so we don't buy it – so nurseries don't stock it because there is no demand. The circle is complete. Specialist nurseries stock plants and the owners of the local tree have said I may collect seed when it is ripe. If I get any, I shall bring it into meetings in the fall. Get some-don't put it off, Mount Baker is classified as an active volcano; it may blow any day.



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