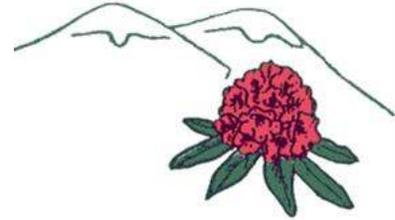


THE RHODOVINE



THE MOUNT ARROWSMITH
RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

MARS
P. O. Box 342
Qualicum Beach, BC
V9K 1S8
mars.rhodos.ca

Volume 24, Issue 7

SEPTEMBER 2012

2012/2013 Executive

President

Ken Jones
586-5002 casper6@shaw.ca

Vice-President

Tony Ansdell
752-4475 ansdella@shaw.ca

Treasurer

Bert Harding
752-3923 ruber@shaw.ca

Secretary

Marilyn Dawson
752-3694 dawsom@shaw.ca

Past President

Tony Ansdell
752-4475 ansdella@shaw.ca

Directors

Don Bridgen
723-3916 dabridgen@gmail.com

Linda Derkach
752-3545 lindaderkach@shaw.ca

Ann DeBrincat
724-5594 darrylhatch@shaw.ca

Maria Bieberstein
468-7252 abieberstein@telus.net

Director at large

John de Boer (778) 424-6699
j_p_deboer@yahoo.ca

Bursary – Tony Ansdell

Christmas Party

Dollar Table - Cassy LaCouvee

Newsletter Editor - Linda Derkach

Garden Tour – Ken Jones

Greeter - Velda Rhodes

Historian - Cassy Lacouvee

Library – Donna deBoer

Meeting Coordinator- Tony Ansdell

Membership – Bert Harding

Milner Gardens - John England

Plant Sale – Marilyn Dawson

Program Chair - Ann DeBrincat

PR - Marilyn Dawson

Refreshments - Anne Gutsche

Sunshine – Maria Bieberstein

Door Prize - Sandra Hemsworth

Truss Show – Glen Jamieson

Ways & Means - Don Bridgen

THIS MONTH: Rhododendrons From Cuttings

This spring we tried planting rhododendron seeds to see what we could grow.

For our September meeting, we will start rhododendrons from cuttings. MARS will supply the pots, the potting mix and some good advice.

Please check your garden for rhododendrons that could spare a stem or two. Water the plant well before snipping and preferably collect them the day of the meeting.

Cuttings do not need to be very long. Four to five inches of stem is plenty for most and small-leaved plants need even less.

Rinse them off and keep them moist (plastic bag and damp paper towel works well) until we use them. **Don't forget to label them** or the bag they are in. Masking tape is a good choice.

On **Wednesday, September 12**, please cruise your garden and gather cuttings of unusual or uncommon rhododendrons to share with your fellow Martians.

MARS Meetings

Qualicum Beach
Civic Centre
2nd Wednesday of the
month 7:30 pm

Next Meeting
Wednesday
September 12, 2012



Looking back at the MARS Garden Tour 2012, *Rhododendron* 'Lem's Best Orange' and *R.* 'Horizon Monarch' made a sensational splash in the garden of John and Arlene England.

Inside this Issue

President's Message	Page 2
Nanaimo Conference	Page 2
Remembering Ron	Page 4
Summer Highlights	Page 5
Volunteers Needed	Page 7
In the Garden	Page 8

From Your President...

It has been a wonderful summer. We spent our summer here and were busy with numerous guests and had two weeks with our grandchildren. They had many adventures making sand castles, walking the beach, picking up shells, taking the teddy bear train to the McLean Mill and playing pirates at the lighthouse in Port Alberni. We took them canoeing on the ocean and had a water fight. They went swimming in the ocean and walking through Cathedral Grove and many other parks in the local area. Grandchildren give us renewed enthusiasm with their many questions and it is fun to watch them and participate with them on their adventures in exploration. They did tire their grandparents and we slept well every night.

I attended the volunteer luncheon at Qualicum Beach Community Centre. I bring back to you their appreciation of all the volunteer hours you give to the community. Volunteers bring a vibrant life to the community in services, the arts and events.

September starts off with a bang with the Rhodos in Paradise Conference taking place in Nanaimo from September 21-23 at the Coast Bastion Inn. I look forward to seeing you at the conference. **Please note that Registration closes on Friday, September 14th at midnight.** The conference website is <http://arsnanaimo2012.ca>

I attended my first District 1 meeting in Comox/Courtenay and visited the garden of Bob Smith, learning something about propagation. I look forward to a return visit in the spring to see the many different rhododendrons in bloom.

See you all on Wednesday, September 12 at 7:30 pm
Ken

The Editors reserve the right to edit submissions to the newsletter for purposes of consistency, clarity and space restrictions.

Excitement Grows for Nanaimo Conference

Chris Southwick and Gaylle McRae

The Western Regional Conference of the ARS, hosted by the Nanaimo Chapter of the ARS is almost here! As of August 26th we have **26 days to go before it begins.**

The Conference Committee is getting excited and looking forward to meeting new friends and greeting "old" ones. We have over **200 people registered** and know that it will be a success – thanks to the many people who have so willingly volunteered their time and talents.

The Committee would like to encourage those of you who haven't yet registered for the conference to do so ASAP. The Conference hotel, the **Coast Bastion Inn is filling up** – but there are also reasonable rooms in close proximity as well.

The Plant Sale will be open to Conference attendees and ARS members only on Friday, the 21st of September (between 2 and 6 pm – downstairs in the Benson Room). On Saturday, the plant sale will be open from 10am until 6pm and on Sunday from 10 am until 1:00 pm. We have both Canadian and American growers and they will all have delicious plants for sale, both species and hybrids that you just can't purchase in any of our local nurseries. One gallon plants will be \$12 and two gallon plants will be \$24, with the exception of the Rhododendron Species Foundation plants (over 200 of them) which will vary in price. Remind your friends that September is a great time to buy rhododendrons and fall is one of the best times to plant them. Terry Richmond and a number of outstanding growers and gardeners will be on hand to give advice and help you find those perfect plants for your gardens. Phyto certificates will not be available for our US guests.

The lineup of speakers is impressive and we know that we'll all learn something new. Both tours are showcasing some fantastic gardens where you'll pick up ideas you can use in your own gardens. The food and venue are both great – no matter if you're just participating in some of the conference or taking it all in. We have some excellent items available for the silent auction and door prize draw and the collector's prints, photo contest and the foliage display will all be well worth seeing.

We are looking forward to welcoming keen gardeners from across North America and sharing our gardening paradise!

See you soon!

Chris Southwick and Gaylle McRae
Conference Co-chairs

Name That Plant

MARS has acquired a Brother electronic labeler that members may borrow to put a professional touch to plant labels in their gardens. It comes with instructions and it is easy to use, but each member must supply his own tape; the labeler uses P-Touch TZe-S221 available at Staples, for example.

Anyone interested in borrowing the labeller should call Marilyn Dawson at 752-3694 or email dawsom@shaw.ca

Geraniums in the Cotswolds

From your Newsletter Editor.....

During my early summer visit to Kiftsgate and Hidcote Gardens in the Cotswolds, I was impressed with the variety of geraniums, and the profusion of blooms utilized in both gardens. A most useful plant, geraniums do very well in our West Coast gardens, billowing over sidewalks and blooming all summer long.



Geranium at Kiftsgate



A lovely bank of geraniums at Kiftsgate Manor...



At Hidcote, a mass planting of blue geraniums was swarming with bees. These hard-working perennials are a good way to attract pollinators to your garden.

Remembering Ron McMaster

As you may already know, a MARS Past President, Ron McMaster, passed away in early August after a brief illness. MARS members share their memories of Ron...

From John England:

I remember Ron as the consummate volunteer who always said "Yes" long before he knew what the job was. Shortly after his retirement and move to Parksville, Ron returned to part-time work.

"I shall remember him as a keen MARS member, who had found out about the genus rhododendron late in his life and therefore wanted to know all the answers- right now! Rest in Peace, Ron"

Marilyn Dawson remembers Ron:

"Few of us realized how much energy was packed into one body. It was Ron's custom to drop off material at my house on his way home from his 6 am swim. No problem. My day was already launched. He was going home to change to make a regular trip to Victoria where he was still working. He was a can-do person who juggled District One and MARS duties along with everything else and managed to maintain an enthusiasm for gardening that extended beyond rhododendrons. His energy was infectious.

Ron could be blunt. He wasted no time getting to the point of his message. Telephone calls went straight to the point without the usual "How are you today". He also could take criticism; he listened – the mark of a true leader. In the past two years we have missed some of this marvellous energy as he slowly wound down. Now we will miss him but won't forget him."

Al and Maria Bieberstein share their memories of Ron:

"When he first came to Parksville to retire, he said he wanted to play golf. He attended a plant sale and was hooked on rhododendrons. Ron had a "get involved" personality. He gave it his all and then some. Every time we asked him for help with anything, he was always there over and above. After one of our plant sale windups, Ron and wife

Judy stayed longer than everyone else. As he was planning to become President, he was asking for some advice on how to handle some aspects of the club, specifically, the proposed species garden. We believe that the money we donated for the species garden stayed earmarked for that specific purpose for the future due to Ron's foresight to secure it as such. He never stopped looking for different rhododendrons for his garden. If he liked it, he bought it or if you said you liked a specific rhododendron, he bought it. He was a plant sellers dream. Ron's biggest problem was not being able to retire. He wanted to do it all. We are very sorry that his last few years were so difficult. He didn't deserve that."

Tony Ansdell shares some thoughts:

"When Ron McMaster moved to Parksville he became interested in rhododendrons. True to his nature, he proceeded to learn everything he could about rhododendrons - the species and hybrids that he liked - how to prepare the ground for them and how to maintain them. As a result he created a beautiful garden featuring rhododendrons.

As part of his learning, he joined the Mt. Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society, and with his wife Judy, took an active part in the club's activities. It is not surprising that, after a few years, he was elected President of the club, a job he did with great enthusiasm.

He was always quick to volunteer his house and garden for club activities and, as a result, we often held wind up celebrations and pot lucks in the surroundings of his wonderful garden. These events were always well attended and a good time was had by all.

I will particularly remember Ron as the voice of MARS over the public address system at the Parksville Curling Club during our annual Truss Show and Plant Sale. He clearly enjoyed that job."

And from your Newsletter Editor....

When I was a brand new member of MARS, Ron was most welcoming, and with Judy invited me to their home and a tour of their lovely garden and their rhododendron successes. Ron was a hard-working, hospitable and friendly member of MARS, and he will be greatly missed.

Summer Highlights....

Once again we begin our “newsletter year” with members sharing highlights and memorable moments of their summer holidays.

The **McLean Mill National Historic Site** in Port Alberni....from **Ellen Rothwell**....



The McLean Mill is a great place to take visiting company! It offers a little trip back in time with steam donkey, logging truck, and saw demonstrations.



John and Arlene England marvelled at this remarkable stallion with a hanging basket type sprinkler system on a timer. This classic in vegetation resides at **Deer Lake Park, Burnaby**.



Joanne Hamilton enjoyed her own garden this summer – and has grown this **Stargazer Lily** that appears to be on steroids!!

Judy Wood went on a 5 night **Aurora Explorer** cruise from **North of Campbell River** in July and thoroughly enjoyed it. The boat is a landing craft that can land on any beach and discharge or pick up whatever freight is necessary over the bow ramp. Freight included vehicles, a boat, two quads, water, food and fuel. The cruise included stops in Bute Inlet, Loughborough Inlet, Stuart Island, Phillips Arm, Hardwicke Island, Broughton Archipelago, Gilford Island and others as well as Alert Bay.



We were able to see areas of our coast that you could otherwise only see if you have your own boat.



The scenery was lovely and the meals were delicious and well-presented. Non-alcoholic beverages and food were always available, and the service outstanding.

There were six cabins - thus 12 passengers and six crew. Our group included ten Canadians (all senior retirees) and a couple from Orlando.

We were welcome on the bridge at any time and the captain would answer questions. The ship services logging camps mainly (including helicopter sites), and also a few recreational fishing areas. It was fascinating to watch the off-and-on loading procedure at each stop. Each day we had a "recreational stop" for a walk on a beach or through the woods, and also toured a WW2 military installation at York on Hardwicke Island.



Our daily delivery schedule was dictated by the tides since many of the channels are narrow and dangerous to transit at any time except slack tide. Despite being pricey at \$2350 each, the cruises are very popular and sell out many months in advance. (I tried to book for the past two years – but was too late.)

From Your Librarian

Donna de Boer

Greetings from your Librarian! I hope everyone had a wonderful summer in their gardens.

We have another very informative book in our library that I want to share with you.

Plant Nutrition & Fertilizer

by Terry Richmond

Sometimes we run into challenges with our plants and this book can help us determine what is missing in our soil and find answers to increase the quality of our soil to grow more healthy and happy plants.

Terry's book helps us determine the pH balance in our soil, what it means, and how to change the pH balance if it is not appropriate for the plants we are growing.

Terry has provided a good recipe for creating better soil. Read about his soil secrets, and how to make your own fertilizer and potting mixes.

Please come and view the wonderful variety of books we have that are jam-packed with information on many horticultural topics.

I look forward to seeing everyone at our next meeting.

Donna

Countdown to Nanaimo Conference

From Marilyn Dawson

Many months of planning and meeting are finally paying off. With only three weeks to go, 17 MARS members are among the more than 200 people registered for the ARS Fall Conference in Nanaimo.

Registrants receive a special bag of goodies and informational material including a Nanaimo bar and the recipe for same. See the website for the registration form and the list of speakers and tours available: arsnanaimo2012.ca

While the conference is mainly the work of members of the Nanaimo Rhododendron Society, other chapters, including MARS are helping out in various ways.

Plant Sale

A committee of five MARS members (Marilyn Dawson, Terry Richmond, Barbara Kulla, Ann DeBrincat and Maria Bieberstein) has been organizing the Plant Sale which will take place over three days in the Benson Room at the Coast Bastion Hotel. The sale is open to the public for Saturday and Sunday, so members are encouraged to tell their friends, neighbors and anyone who is interested in plants that are not usually available locally.

Terry Richmond has been negotiating with rhododendron growers in Oregon and the Rhododendron Species Foundation as well as Paul Wurz of Hidden Acres and we expect to see some of the new hybrids that we've been hearing about.

Volunteers Needed

Several people have already signed up to volunteer, but we need more. Terry will need volunteers to help bring in plants and later to take away the unsold. We also need volunteers to help at the cashiers' desk and on the floor. Volunteers for the plant sale do not have to register if they don't plan to attend any of the events.

There are also volunteer opportunities needed elsewhere. See Marilyn Dawson if you are interested, or email her at dawsom@shaw.ca Yvonne Harding of the Nanaimo chapter will be phoning volunteers about their assignments.

In the Garden...

September and October...

From Joan Rich and Linda Derkach

While our precious rhododendrons are relatively maintenance-free in the fall and winter, there are some things we need to do to ensure they come through the winter looking good and blooming profusely in the spring.

Fall Care

Ensure your rhododendrons have enough water in the fall to prepare them for winter winds and cold. It has been very dry for weeks. Hopefully you have been watering adequately during the summer.

A few sprinkles of rain will not take care of the summer or autumn drought, so be sure to water thoroughly before the cold sets in so they have time to take up moisture before systems slow markedly.

Rhododendrons can be damaged in big winds and cold if they do not have enough moisture.

Transplanting

October is the best time of year to move rhododendrons.

Choose a spot where your plant will have the optimum conditions in which it likes to grow. **Most rhododendrons need some sunshine** to set bud for blooms the following year. A site in morning sun with some protection from hot afternoon sun works well. Some rhododendrons can take more sun than others, so do a little research before you plant.

Wind can also be a problem. Some rhododendrons can survive cold winter winds, but many others will suffer leaf damage and bud loss. Generally, a spot with protection from brisk winter winds is best.

Plant your rhododendron high to ensure good drainage with no standing water. The majority of rhododendrons in our gardens originated from plants which grow in Asia where they are lashed with heavy rain through the year. However, with most of them growing on steep slopes, the water runs downhill providing good drainage.

Check that exposed rhododendrons have **adequate mulch** before frost and cold temperatures arrive. And keep the mulch away from the trunk of your plant to avoid creating a place for rot to set in.



Rhododendron 'Blaney's Blue' in the garden of John and Arlene England appears to be very happy with its location in the garden.



Rhododendron 'Hot Dawn' came to me with the free rhodies from Briggs two years ago, and bloomed for the first time this June. It is a Brueckner hybrid and has been bred to withstand cold weather. As yet, I have not challenged it with cold winter winds. The bloom was stunning!!