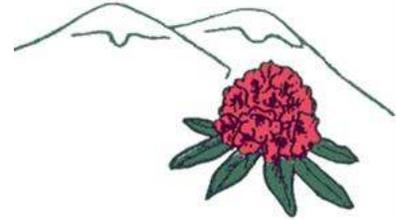


# THE RHODOVINE



THE MOUNT ARROWSMITH

MARS

RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

P. O. Box 342

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Qualicum Beach. BC

NOVEMBER 2012

THIS MONTH:

## MARS Meetings

Qualicum Beach  
Civic Centre  
2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the  
month 7:30 pm

Next Meeting  
**Wednesday,**  
**November 14, 2012**

In the Bieberstein garden...



*Acer palmatum* (unknown variety)



Maple tree seed pods...

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**Bursary** – Tony Ansdell

**Christmas Party**

**Dollar Table** - Cassy LaCouvee

**Newsletter Editor** - Linda Derkach

**Garden Tour** –

**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

Our Program  
will be a

**SURPRISE!!**

As the hour arrived  
for our newsletter to  
go out, our program  
for this month was not  
quite confirmed.

But fear not, there  
will be an interesting  
program for us all to  
enjoy!!

See you

**Wednesday,**  
**November 14 at 7:30**

## From Your President...

At the Annual General Meeting in May of this year, Ken Jones was elected as President of MARS. He also volunteered to be the chairman of the Garden Tour Committee. Ken started his duties with a lot of enthusiasm and energy, just what I think the club needs. Unfortunately, a few weeks ago, Ken informed us that he is unable to continue these activities. This is a great loss to the club but life goes on.

As an interim measure, and with the agreement of the Executive Committee, I will assume the position of Acting President and Linda Derkach will assume the position of Chair of the Garden Tour Committee. I say "as an interim measure" because I am looking for new volunteers to fill these positions. Each position needs new blood and new ideas and new energy and enthusiasm. Volunteers can either assume these positions immediately or can understudy Linda and me for a while and take on the full position later, whichever they are most comfortable with.

So, come on MARS people, the club needs you in order to continue being **the** club for Rhodo enthusiasts. Get in touch with me to explore the effort that is needed for these positions.

A couple of weeks ago, Marilyn Dawson and I went to a planning meeting for the Spring 2015 ARS convention to be held in Victoria. We were both pleased to see how well the planning was going and how the Victoria club is trying to involve all of the District 1 clubs. Because of geography the Victoria club will be shouldering most of the work, but it is incumbent on us to do what we can to lessen the work. Decisions made at the meeting are that the Convention will be held at the Mary

Winspear Centre in Sidney and will be on May 6-10, 2015.

Unfortunately this coincides with our annual Mothers' Day Weekend Garden Tour so we will have to plan carefully so our members can be free to attend most of the Convention.

Remember, the MARS Christmas Party will be on Saturday, December 8 in the Rotary Hall. More information will be coming soon.

I hope to see you all there for an enjoyable evening and a chance for us all to socialize outside of the usual meeting format.

Tony

## Mark Your Calendar....

### **MARS Christmas Party**

Saturday, December 8, 2012  
Rotary Hall, Qualicum Beach

### **Brian Minter Presentation**

MARS January Regular Meeting  
Wednesday, January 9, 2013

### **MARS Rhododendron Show and Sale**

Saturday, April 27, 2013  
Parksville Curling Club

### **MARS Spring Fling Plant Sale**

Saturday, May 4, 2013

### **MARS Mothers' Day Weekend Garden Tour**

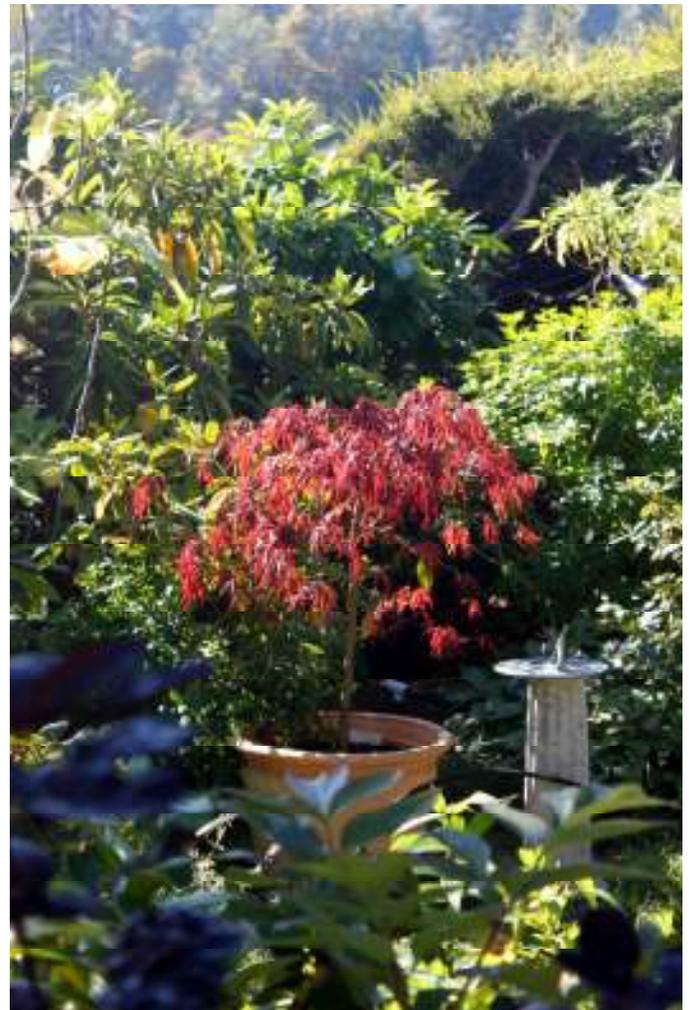
May 11 and 12, 2013

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

## Japanese Maples: Natural Companions for Rhododendrons

Summer fooled us this year, starting very late and then lingering until mid-October. But our plants are rarely hoodwinked - they know when winter is approaching and begin the slow shut down of systems that will enable them to survive the bluster and cold of dark days and months. And with that slow transition, we have the best show of the year - the turning of the leaves. Even our evergreen rhododendrons have a natural senescence - turning old leaves yellow and eventually dropping them to the ground as mulch. But in October the headline act belongs to deciduous trees - in particular our native *Acer macrophylla* and a huge range of other native and non-native deciduous shrubs - including the iconic Japanese maple. Driving our country roads, the yellow, gold and orange of our native maple slowly grows into a crescendo of amazing colour - one of the most beautiful times of the year. But our native maple tree is usually too big for the average garden, so we turn to Japanese maples to work magic in our home landscapes. Grafted Japanese maples are smaller, more weeping and spreading than the species. The two main divisions are the dissectums and all the rest. Dissectums are often called laceleaf maples for their deeply divided and dissected leaves. Most grow slowly to 8 feet high and

12 feet wide - possibly bigger in the Northwest. They often have sinuous trunks and branches, making them a key feature in the winter garden - especially with a sifting of snow. But in autumn, they turn amazing shades of red, orange, pink, maroon, gold and yellow - a brilliant performance as night time temperatures diminish.



*Acer palmatum dissectum* 'Crimson Queen' provides needed colour and contrast throughout the year. But in autumn, it becomes a brilliant scarlet before draping the ground with its leaves. In the garden, it can grow to a 9 foot mounded shrub. But it

can also stay in a pot for many years, moving obligingly where colour is needed - and where a brilliant focal point brings the fall garden alive. Starting as no more than a stick, this specimen has been potted up several times, but remains a manageable size to move around as needed.



This *Acer palmatum dissectum* 'Waterfall' has remained content in a pot for many years. Lacy, fern-like leaves turn from limey-green to brilliant orange and gold in the fall. With *R.* 'Party Orange' it is a beacon of warmth on a cool day.



The lovely orange/red leaves of *Acer palmatum* 'Osakazuki' ...lit by the late afternoon sun in October.



*Acer palmatum* 'Osakazuki' is an upright grower, becoming wider with age. In the garden, it can reach 25 feet, but it can also be happy in a container for many years. This tree will never disappoint. Its rich green leaves become a brilliant crimson in fall, and in the rays of the late day sun, lights up a garden as though on fire. Backed by the maroon leaves of *Cotinus* 'Grace' it has many passing admirers. If I could have but one Japanese maple, this would be it!



Dwarf *Acer palmatum* 'Sekka yatsubusa' grows to 7 feet. Green leaves edged in rusty-orange turn yellow/orange in fall. The lovely, elegant form is thickly covered with deeply divided, tapered leaves.

If you don't yet have one or two Japanese maples, now is the time to plant and enjoy!

**MARS General Meeting**  
**Wednesday, October 10, 2012**  
**Held at the**

**Civic Centre in Qualicum Beach at 7:30 pm**

**Minutes of the last meeting were approved as published in the Rhodovine.**

**GUESTS: Judy Love-Eastham**

**REFRESHMENTS: Joanne Hamilton, Irene Brooks**

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT:**

Tony Ansdell opened the meeting, explaining that Ken Jones has resigned as President because of health issues. His resignation has left two vacancies that need to be filled for the current year – that of President and Garden Tour Chair. Vice President and Past President, Tony said he would be Acting President until someone steps up to take the job. Ken was also chair of the Garden Tour Committee and Linda Derkach has agreed to be acting chair, stressing the need for someone to fill the spot. Linda has chaired the Garden Tour in the past. Tony said he was genuinely sorry to lose Ken because he had energy and ideas that might encourage new membership.

Oceanside Travel is organizing tours of English gardens, including Chelsea, for 2013. Anyone interested can get contact information from Tony.

Tony urged members to pay their dues by next month. They are still \$30, the lowest in District One. The ARS wants all dues to be paid before December to ensure that members receive the ARS Journal uninterrupted.

Tony also handles membership chores. He will have a membership report in January.

**PROPAGATION WORKSHOP:** Glen Jamieson reminded members that there is a propagation session at Ken Webb's in Victoria on October 13. Full details are in the [Rhodovine](#).

**SPRING FLING:** The Community Hall in Qualicum Beach has been booked for the Spring Fling on May 4, 2013.

**CHRISTMAS PARTY:** Terry Richmond will again provide the turkey and trimmings for the Christmas party on Saturday, December 8 at Rotary Hall.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** Marilyn Dawson read an email from Gaylle McRae, co-chair of the Nanaimo Conference thanking MARS and all those who participated in the conference plant sale, setting up Thursday night and tidying up Sunday afternoon as well as the work in between.

**PROGRAM:** Ann DeBrincat is still working out details for the November program and she outlined plans for 2013. In January, Brian Minter will return to Qualicum Beach to speak on a topic different from the one he chose for the Eaglecrest Garden Club. Dick Beamish of the Nanaimo RS is the February speaker. In April, Verna and Bob Duncan of Saanich will talk about growing rare fruit trees.

**GARDEN TOUR:** Linda Derkach said the essential job for the Garden Tour committee right now is to find suitable gardens in the area ranging from French Creek to Dashwood. Gardens are usually selected by the end of the year. She welcomed suggestions from members. As editor of the Rhodovine, Linda also encourages, even urges members to send photos, copy or ideas.

**TRUSS SHOW:** Glen Jamieson said he hopes to introduce some changes to the show and sale on April 27, perhaps some short presentations on rhododendron culture in the coffee area of the curling rink, where it is warmer. MARS will also make use of the driftwood that was used for a species display at the Nanaimo conference. Al and Maria Bieberstein will create a display for our show.

**WAYS AND MEANS:** For the second month in a row there were many plants to disperse. Door prize was *Rhododendron* 'April Glow' won by Bob Baird. Draw prizes were *R.* 'Blaney's Blue', *R.* 'Nancy Evans', *R.* 'Cheer' donated by Barbara Kulla and a large *Oxydendrum arboreum* (Sourwood or Sorrel tree) donated by Ann DeBrincat. Winners were Ray Walker, Joanne Hamilton, Kathy Jones and Dan Schwartz.

**SPEAKERS:** Art and Susan Lightburn were the featured speakers, presenting a pictorial account of their seven-week trip to China. Now president of the Nanaimo Rhododendron Society, Art cautioned that this was the first of a two-part travelogue, not a garden tour. They started in the northeast, eventually making their way across the country into Tibet. The photos (mostly Susan's) provided a wide-ranging look at China today.

Meeting adjourned: 9:25 pm

## Mark Your Calendar....



### **Brian Minter** **is our January 2013 Speaker**

**Wednesday, January 9, 2013**

On Wednesday, January 9, 2013, well-known nurseryman, plantsman and speaker Brian Minter comes to MARS and Qualicum Beach. Brian is known for his enthusiastic and information-packed presentations – this time on:

#### **“Taking Your Garden to the Next Level”**

So mark your calendar now, let your friends and neighbours know...this will be a welcome and exciting event in the dark days of January!!

**We are assured it will be different than the Eaglecrest GC presentation in October.**

#### **Don't forget.....**

2013 Membership Dues  
Please bring \$30 to the November meeting or  
mail to Tony Ansdell, PO Box 342,  
Qualicum Beach V9K 1S8

## Greetings From Your Librarian...

Winter months are coming upon us quickly. Enjoy those slower days and nights curled up with a good book on a subject we all love. We have again received some fantastic new books for our library.

Please come and take a NEW look at what we have.

It's exciting to discover things we never knew... or refresh our minds with information we once knew but might have misplaced.

We have books on growing Tasty Tropical Plants, beautiful No Mow Yards and Creating Concrete Garden Projects. There are treasures in every book.

**Donna deBoer, MARS Librarian**

#### **Correction...**

My apologies to Bert Harding...I incorrectly identified the gentleman with Ken Gibson below as Bert...and since the fellow is so handsome...Bert is not insulted...but it is not Bert.



Photo: Susan Lightburn

## The Fall Garden of Al & Maria Bieberstein...



Sun blasting through the leaves of *Cercidiphyllum japonicum* (Katsura)



*Acer palmatum* 'Kagiri Nishiki' thriving in a pot...



Witch hazel, *Acer palmatum* 'Koto no ito' and the beautiful Katsura in the background

## Victoria Propagation Workshop

By Kim Hammond, Milner Gardens

Under rain tarps on the deck of Ken Webb's home, forty plus people gathered to discuss their favourite topic - rhododendrons. Ken Gibson spoke first on general propagation needs. Heating cable (apparently Integrity Sales in Victoria sells "proper" heating cable) spaced four inches apart, heated to about 70 degrees, plants covered to contain humidity, and how cuttings should be an "average" length. The width of your hand seems to be the determined size. Large cuttings will rot too quickly. Cuttings should have the right amount of "bendiness". Obviously a subjective thing but he insists you get better at judging that as you go.

Dean was next speaking on hybridizing and saving seed. Seeds saved are placed in 6 pack cells under lights and bottom heat. Once rooted he pots them up immediately and places them in dappled shade on the north side of the house and off the ground. They are repotted in small increments and says it takes him about five years to get to a full 2 gallon saleable plant. My take away from Dean is that roots on seedlings are more robust than those produced by cuttings.

Doug Gilmour collects seeds when light yellow to brown and encouraged people to buy seeds and pollen from ARS and RSF and try their own crosses. The seeds once planted will need protection, preferably inside for the first year. He fertilized with 20/20/20 at one point (tsk tsk) and found all his leaves turned yellow. He has since resorted to Milorganite (usually sold as an organic lawn fertilizer) and was very pleased with results. The resulting discussion about the Milorganite and organic fertilizers was quite an eye opener for me as to how many were unfamiliar with organic methods. (I still find it an interesting phenomenon that most rhodie people are male - is there a correlation to "doing the way it was always done"?)

Joe McMillan was next on pruning - always a hot topic in any garden setting. He is a firm believer in bud pruning for good branching and removing weak

branches. He also recommends raising crowns and being diligent about removing root stock growth. Joe suggests using hockey tape instead of electrician's tape - it breathes better. He shears small leaved rhodies, including the azaleas and lepidotes and reminded us that lepidotes will break from hard wood.

Next was a slide show of Jim Barlup's rhodies soliciting many oohs and aahs. Apparently some of the plants will be available from Erica Nurseries in Pitt Meadows.

Ken Gibson spoke on grafting. He uses *Rhododendron* 'Cunningham's White' and R. 'Polar Bear', with a one inch slope on the cutting. Once placed, he wraps, labels, waters, covers, places it on heat and waits. He places his grafts on the North side of the house, no sun, in February and March.

The final speaker was a guest nicknamed Super Dennis. He is the Propagator for the Rhododendron Species Foundation and the information was extensive. What I managed to scribble down follows.....

He calls rhodie propagation a race between rotting and rooting. Taking the cutting is the most important step with many considerations. The length, condition, placement on the plant itself, stressed or not, juvenility, bendiness (there it is again!) non-budded, (if you must take a budded stem do not de-bud - it rots). The downside of using a budded stem is that the buds are inhibitive. He likens the readiness of a cutting to a snap bean. If the Carbon /Nitrogen ratio is right for cutting success he says it has that snap bean feel/sound.

He ensures the plant was well watered the day before, that there is no lignified tissue (brown bits) in the cutting, (watch for second year growth that is starting to turn yellow - it indicates the beginning stages of lignification) as lignified tissue is actually another inhibitor to rooting. Axillary stems are more rootable than terminals. If a cutting is really bendy and doesn't break it is likely too high in Nitrogen and will rot. The width of your hand or larger is his suggested size but it still is relative to the leaf size. Good soil stem contact is important and Dennis recommends removing all of the

indumentum on stems AND leaves. He uses 1/4 coir fibre and 2/3 perlite, no ragged edges on cuttings, including heel cuttings, they will rot too easily and the size of the cutting should be relative to the leaf size. No leaves should touch the medium. Wounding should be on the lower side of the cutting so that when it is placed into the soil it is less likely to disturb and peel back the layers between the cambium and outer tissue, giving fungus a place to settle. Do not wound into the pithy part of the stem. Wounding works because auxins go to the wound site to heal the wound and the auxins promote the rooting process. Bruising, crushing is a no-no, remove all mosses and liverworts as they appear (they block air exchange). Azaleas root better with gels and liquids as opposed to powders. Once rooted, fertilize very lightly to bulk up roots. When being potted-up he suggests an open bottomed pot at least five inches deep, on 70 degree heat. His big thing- roots rot if they're too hot. There was so much information I'm sure I'll need to hear his talk a few more times to really retain it all...

Altogether a great day of learning with an overwhelming amount of information from some of the best. The food, the people, the garden, even the drive there and back, even getting lost in the process was an adventure I'd do again. And again, and again...

Kim Hammond



*Parrotia persica* (Persian Ironwood) in the Birberstein garden - a great tree for the small garden with fabulous fall colour!