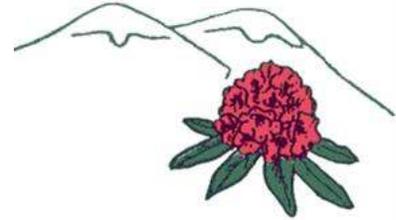


THE RHODOVINE



THE MOUNT ARROWSMITH

MARS

RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

P. O. Box 342

Qualicum Beach. BC

Volume 26, Issue 2

FEBRUARY 2014

2013/2014 Executive

President

Linda Derkach

752-3545 lindaderkach@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

Ann DeBrincat

724-5594 darrylhatch@shaw.ca

Maria Bieberstein

468-7252 abieberstein@telus.net

Kathy Loyer

738-0138 kathyloyer@shaw.ca

Ray Walker

248-5138 jrjiffy@shaw.ca

Bursary – Tony Ansdell

Christmas Party

Dollar Table - Cassy LaCouvee

Newsletter Editor - Linda Derkach

Garden Tour – Kathy Loyer

Truss Show – Ray Walker

Greeter – Guy Loyer

Historian - Cassy Lacouvee

Library – Donna deBoer

Meeting Coordinator- Tony Ansdell

Membership – Tony Ansdell

Milner Gardens - John England

Program Chair - Ann DeBrincat

PR - Marilyn Dawson

Refreshments - Anne Gutsche

Sunshine – Maria Bieberstein

THIS MONTH:

Ciscoe Morris

Creating a Wildlife- Friendly Garden

Wednesday, February 12
at 7:30 pm
**Plant Sale starts
at 6:45**

**Come and join us for this
special presentation from
one of the Pacific
NorthWest's most
knowledgeable and
popular garden experts.**

**Wildlife-friendly plants
for sale by
Cultivate Garden and Gifts
and
Arrowsmith Greenhouses.**

MARS Meetings

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

Next Meeting

**Wednesday,
February 12**



Last August, this hummingbird was most intrigued with *Galtonia candicans* (Summer Hyacinth) growing here next to *Solidago canadensis* 'Baby Gold' which attracts beneficial insects to the garden.

Inside.....

Ciscoe Morris	Page 2
Events	Page 3
Minutes	Page 4
South Africa Sojourn.....	Page 5
Rhododendron Tips.	Page 7
Garden Journal	Page 8
Gardening Events	Page 9

Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society
Presents

Ciscoe Morris



Creating a Wildlife-Friendly Garden

Date: Wednesday, February 12, 2014

Time: 7:30 pm **Doors Open at 6:45 pm**

Place: Qualicum Beach Civic Centre

Bonus: **Cultivate Garden Centre** and **Arrowsmith Greenhouses**
will have wildlife-friendly plants for sale starting at 6:45.

Everyone is welcome!

Non-members: \$5

Ciscoe Morris is a well-known Pacific North-West gardening expert and television personality in Seattle. His book, Ask Ciscoe, was among the top selling garden books nationwide.

Ciscoe has co-authored books on roses and perennials, and writes a weekly garden column in the Seattle Times. Ciscoe leads garden tours all over the world, and is a much sought-after speaker.

Snippets from Your Executive.....

❖ Change of Meeting Date for March

Our March meeting will be held one week later than usual due to an event at the Civic Centre
March 19 is the new date.

❖ Bring a friend...

MARS members are encouraged to bring a friend to our meetings. We have great programs coming up....good information for everyone. Invite your neighbours too!

❖ Dollar Plus Table

Do you have surplus plants sitting around? No room in your garden? Here's a chance to clear out attractive but unnecessary plants and other garden-related treasures that someone else will love! Bring to our Dollar Plus Table and free up space.

MARS Programs in 2014....

February 2014

- ❖ Ciscoe Morris of Seattle TV Fame**
 - ✓ **Creating a Wildlife-Friendly Garden**

Important Dates to Remember in 2014....

Wednesday, February 12

- ❖ Ciscoe Morris comes to MARS**

- ❖ QB Civic Centre**

- ❖ Time: 7:30 pm**

Doors Open for Plant Sale: 6:45

Everyone Welcome!

Saturday, April 26

- ❖ MARS Rhododendron Show and Sale**

- ❖ Parksville Arena**

- ❖ Time: 10 am to 2 pm**

Saturday & Sunday, May 10 and 11

- ❖ MARS Garden Tour**

Sunday, June 22

- ❖ MARS 25th Anniversary Celebration**

- ❖ Rotary Park in Qualicum Beach**

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

Wildlife-Friendly Plants

Recommended by

Ciscoe Morris

1. *Ribes sanguineum* - red-flowering Currant
2. *Dicentra* 'Gold Heart'
3. Pulmonaria – lungwort
4. *Lithodora diffusa* 'Grace Ward'
5. *Cornus sanguinea* - red twig dogwood
6. *Cornus mas* - cornelian cherry
7. *Callicarpa bodinieri* 'Profusion'
8. Pyracantha
9. *Arbutus unedo* - strawberry tree
10. *Embothrium coccineum* - Chilean fire tree
11. Delphinium
12. *Monarda* 'Jacob Kline'
13. Evergreen Penstemon
14. *Phygelius* - cape fuchsia
15. Lupine
16. *Salvia* 'Lipstick' and other Salvias
17. Crocosmia
18. Kniphofia - torch lily
19. *Cerintho major* 'Purpurescens' - honey wort
20. *Lobelia tupa*
21. Hardy Fuchsia
22. *Mahonia media* - any winter blooming varieties
23. Sarcococca - sweet box
24. *Viburnum x bodnantense* 'Dawn'
25. *Daphne odora* 'Marginata' *Grevillea victoriae*
26. *Buddleja* 'Lo & Behold' series - sterile butterfly bush
27. *Sedum* 'Autumn Joy' and other upright varieties
28. Yarrow
29. Dianthus – pinks
30. Armeria – thrift
31. Knautia
32. *Spirea japonica* various varieties
33. Echinacea
34. *Pennisetum orientale* 'Karley Rose' and other ornamental grasses

Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society

General Meeting

held at the Qualicum Beach Civic Centre

January 8, 2014

Guests outnumbered MARS members as more than 100 people came to learn about the care of rhododendrons through winter into spring. Seven people joined the chapter. The business part of the general meeting was abridged to allow time for the guest panel to express themselves and answer as many questions as possible. After President Linda Derkach welcomed everyone, the panel got to work followed by a coffee break before the business session. Here are the highlights:

1. The door prize was *Rhododendron* 'Fabia Tangerine'. Other prizes were *R.* 'Ramapo', *R.* 'Phyllis Korn' and *R. morii*. 'Winners included Joan Rich, Maizie Walsh and Maria Bieberstein.
2. Members were reminded that the March meeting has been pushed back a week and will take place on March 19 at the QB Civic Centre.
3. Members were also handed brochures on the February 12 meeting which features Seattle garden writer and television personality Ciscoe Morris. Doors open at 6:45 pm and both Cultivate and Arrowsmith Nurseries will have plants for sale to complement the talk entitled Creating a Wildlife-Friendly Garden. Brochures will also be handed out at Seedy Saturday.
4. The executive has decided on a two-day bus trip to Victoria and Saanich. A show of hands agreed to the dates, May 5 and 6. Details about the cost will come later.
5. Members were urged to bring material for the dollar table including plants as well as other garden-related material. The next dollar table will be at the March 19 meeting.

Meeting adjourned: 9:40 pm

South Africa Sojourn

A while back, MARS members were invited to share photos and stories of their travels. Long-time member Joan Rich shares memories of her trip to South Africa, which included flora and fauna.

I spent a couple of weeks visiting South Africa last October and November. This was my second trip to South Africa, but it was not a gardens tour this time. Instead, we travelled from Johannesburg to Kruger Park and continued south through Swaziland and down the coast road, close to the Indian Ocean, on our way to Capetown. There was colour from flowering trees, shrubs and ground hugging perennials during the entire tour.

Unfortunately, we usually travelled at 120 kph on the colourful Garden Route and stops were rather infrequent, so I did not manage to take many photos on this section. However, there were several plants which I particularly enjoyed seeing.

On the first day, we drove to Pretoria and were fortunate to arrive at the peak flowering time of the blue Jacaranda trees (*Jacaranda mimosifolia*).



Avenues of *Jacaranda mimosifolia*

There are over 70,000 jacarandas adorning the roads, parks and gardens of the city. What a glorious sight! We took photographs standing above the terraced gardens in front of the Union Building where Nelson Mandela recently lay in state for three days. The tall downtown buildings and the houses on the hill beyond all appeared to rise from a purple-blue haze.

The first Jacaranda trees were imported from South America in the 1880's. As they are exotic trees and have an invasive root system and need lots of water preventing anything else from growing around them, there is debate in Pretoria as to whether they should be removed soon, or at least not replaced when these hundred-year-old plants die. The colourful show that they put on was truly memorable.



Mimetes cucullatus is popular with nectivorous birds such as Cape sugar birds and sunbird species.

Many other striking flowers we saw belonged to the Proteaceae family which contained about 360 species from 14 genera in South Africa. They are one of the three main plant groups of *fynbos*, which forms part of the Cape floral kingdom, and they vary in size from small shrubs to large trees.



Leucospermum (Pincushion Protea)

The unusual flower heads may look like artichokes, cones, spiders or pincushions and the foliage is also diverse, ranging from large paddle-shaped leaves to fine needles. The large flowered King Protea (*Protea cynaroides*) is the national flower of South Africa. The pincushion Proteas (*Leucospermum*) coloured many of the hillsides we traversed, with their orange or yellow flowers. Many forms of Proteas are growing in Kirstenbosch Garden which I was fortunate to visit again.



Leucospermum (pincushion Protea)

Other attractive plants I enjoyed were the Watsonias (Bugle Lily) with their erect spikes of showy flowers in shades of orange, red,

yellow, pink or white. They grow from corms and belong to the Iris family (Iridaceae).



Watsonia

It was certainly a pleasant time to travel to South Africa, with daytime temperatures reaching as high as 39 C on a couple of days, and it was thrilling to see such an incredible number and variety of plants.



Leucadendron strobilinum

Tips for the

Rhododendron Crowd

Pearls of wisdom gleaned from our expert panel presentation at the January meeting

By Marilyn Dawson

The subject was rhododendrons and their care in winter and early spring. And although it was a rainy, miserable night, the crowd of more than 100 were very attentive, listening to four panelists give their views. As one person said later, "It is so reassuring to know there is more than one way to do things."

Three members of the panel came from the Nanaimo Rhododendron Society: President Art Lightburn, John Deniseger and Chris Southwick. The fourth was MARS member Don Bridgen.

Moderator Linda Derkach offered a series of questions that sometimes brought amusing answers....such as what to do during the cold and snow and ice...that is if we were to get any!! Art Lightburn said quickly, "Go to Arizona", but then more seriously tackled the question with the other panelists.

Here are some of the highlights of the evening's discussion:

- If the ground can be worked it is safe to work outdoors, planting or weeding. In fact everyone agreed early weeding is good so that the weeds do not go to seed and create more work in the busier times ahead.
- Plants can be brushed gently to remove snow, but most of the panel preferred to leave snow alone as an insulator from the cold. Heavily laden branches can be propped up from below.
- The panelists spoke from their own experiences and individual micro-climates. Art lives in Craig Bay area, John in Bowser, Chris in Nanaimo away from the sea and Don in Port Alberni, all very different growing areas.

- It is safe to repot plants in winter.
- If branches are broken, but not snapped off, a repair can be attempted. A large branch may need to be pinned, or even bolted. Smaller branches can be treated with electrical tape. All agreed it is worth trying before reaching for the pruners. John suggested looking at the reason for the break and studying the structure of the plant and its siting.
- Wind is one of the biggest enemies of rhododendrons. Leaves can be desiccated by strong winds and plants should be sited with that in mind, and soil kept moist.
- Even in winter plants need water. Maybe not every winter, but this year so far has been relatively dry. In most gardens, there are dry spots all year, under the eaves or under dense treed areas that will always require water. In our northwest climate, rhododendrons do not go dormant during the winter, so watering may be necessary if there is little rain.

After solving some of winter's woes, the panel turned to spring preparation. Where do you start and when? Obviously there was no exact recipe for every garden:

- Some members fertilize in December when plants show stress. Don uses Epsom salts and iron chelate if necessary. Chris preferred not to fertilize, instead relying on a good soil mix and good drainage to keep the plants healthy.
- All agreed that a regular walk-around was an essential part of gardening. Take the time to look at plants and notice problem areas.
- Mulching is a necessary part of gardening to retain moisture; the preferred time is late fall. Mulch materials vary from sea soil to compost to bark.
- Deadheading, necessary or not? With well-established plants perhaps it is not necessary, but esthetically beneficial. The panel preferred to deadhead smaller rhododendrons, partly because of the appearance and partly because it is better to allow the plant to use its energy in growth rather than setting seeds. Don was adamant about rhododendrons in pots - deadhead them for sure.

- One essential piece of advice: do some research and planning and choose the right plant for the available area. Before buying, the audience was urged to research plants in various websites such as www.hirsutum.info and www.rhododendron.org – the website of the American Rhododendron Society. Don't plant a rhododendron that will grow to 12 feet or more in an area that can handle only maybe 3 or 4 feet. Choosing properly eliminates the need to prune drastically later on or move the plant.
- However, moving is an option even for huge rhododendrons, but root prune all the around the plant days before the big move.

From Sunny Mexico...



To brighten our day, John and Arlene England share this photo of the bougainvillea growing next door during their stay in Chacala, Nayarit, Mexico.

And from gray and rainy Qualicum....



Helleborus 'Pink Frost' is a prolific bloomer.

Garden Journal

Linda Derkach, MARS President

On this rainy and blustery January weekend, I am sure many of us are “rhododendron-dreaming” with thoughts of brave early bloomers that are not far off. *Rhododendron* ‘Ptarmigan’ is about to burst with masses of little white flowers, situated next to a path and perfect for my modest-sized garden.



Rhododendron 'Ptarmigan'

Always a surprise and delight is *Hamamelis* ‘Arnold Promise’ that is bare twigs one day and bright yellow blooms the next.



Hamamelis x intermedia 'Arnold Promise'

I urge you to take a stroll through your garden and find some unique signs of spring!!

The **Alpine Gardeners of Central Vancouver Island (AGCVI)**

Present

Dr. Hans Roemer

speaking on

Growing Bulbs on the Dry Side of Vancouver Island

Monday, February 24, 2014

1:00 - 3:00 p.m. (doors open 12:30)

Qualicum Beach Civic Centre, Lions Room, 747 Jones St., QB

\$5 at door includes Entry in Prize Draw and Coffee/Tea.

For further information, please contact Valerie Melanson

Melanson.valerie@gmail.com or Phone 250-594-4423



Calochortus tolmiei



Crocus oreocreticus

Hans Roemer's presentation will be on the bulbs that are happy with our local climate on SE Vancouver Island. He will emphasize species (or 'botanical') bulbs and those that are small enough to fit rock gardens or containers in a cold frame or alpine house.

Hans has selected the species he grows on the basis of their home climate and will briefly demonstrate this selection process with maps and climate diagrams. He will show many members of the genus *Crocus*, *Narcissus*, *Fritillaria* and *Tulipa*, as well as those of smaller groups and will discuss their needs and favorite garden habitats.

Photos by Hans Roemer



Hans Roemer

Biography:

Hans Roemer was born and raised in southern Germany. Before coming to Canada he apprenticed in horticulture and studied landscape architecture and landscape ecology.

After his immigration to Canada in 1967, he specialized in plant ecology and earned a PhD degree in this field from the University of Victoria in 1972.

Most of his professional work was in the conservation field with the provincial Ecological Reserves Program and with the Provincial Park System. After retiring from the provincial civil service in 2002, Hans has been working as a botanical consultant, mainly in rare plant inventories and monitoring.

Hans has been a member of the Vancouver Island Rock and Alpine Garden Society for over 30 years and led many club outings to the mountains of Vancouver Island and northern Washington State. Most of his gardening is with bulbs and other drought-tolerant plants. Hans is a contributor to a new book on alpine plants of the Pacific Northwest (Pojar & MacKinnon 2013).

Mid Island Floral Art Club

Next Meeting:

Have A Go at Creating Geometric Floral Designs

Thursday, February 13 at 1:45 pm

St. Stephens Church Hall

150 Village Way.

For information: 250-937-1350