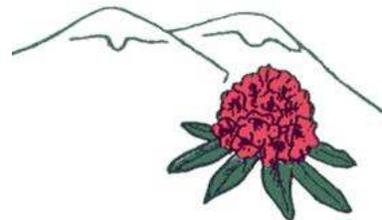


THE RHODOVINE



THE MOUNT ARROWSMITH

MARS

RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

P. O. Box 342

Volume 26, Issue 4

Qualicum Beach. BC

APRIL 2014

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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:

Margaret Cadwaladr

speaking on

The History of Milner Gardens

We are very lucky to have this beautiful and historic garden right here in Qualicum Beach. Created to a large extent by Veronica Milner, the garden design and selection of choice trees and perennials reveal an artist's eye.

Come to hear the rich history of this diverse garden and re-new your annual membership in Milner at great savings.

Bring your friends!!

MARS Meetings

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

Next Meeting

Wednesday,
April 9
7:30 pm



Rhododendron 'Fabia Exbury' is just one of many spectacular and very old rhododendrons blooming in early June at Milner Gardens and Woodland. Several walks through the garden during April, May and June are well worth the effort!!

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2014 Events of Note

Saturday, April 26

- ❖ *MARS Rhododendron Show and Sale*
- ❖ *Parksville Curling Rink*
- ❖ *Time: 10 am to 2 pm*

Monday & Tuesday, May 5 & 6

- ❖ *MARS Bus Tour of public and private gardens in Victoria and Saanich Peninsula*

Saturday & Sunday, May 10 & 11

- ❖ *MARS Garden Tour*

Sunday, June 22

- ❖ *MARS 25th Anniversary Celebration*
- ❖ *Rotary Park in Qualicum Beach*



Shy April bloomer *Rhododendron 'Conroy'* varies from garden to garden...but never fails to delight.

April Meeting Highlights

We welcome spring - our busiest time of year!

Please be sure to join us at our April meeting to:

- ❖ **Re-new your Milner Gardens membership at a bargain rate.**
- ❖ **Hear Margaret Cadwaladr on "The History of Milner Gardens"**
- ❖ **Learn how to prepare a truss for the Rhododendron Show and Sale on April 26**

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

MARS Celebrates 25 Years of Service and Camaraderie

MARS is more than just a garden club. In August, the Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society will pass the 25 year mark as an important society contributing “social capital” to this area of Vancouver Island. Over these years, MARS members have enhanced our communities by...

- ❖ Sharing information about the care and culture of rhododendrons*
- ❖ Increasing general plant knowledge*
- ❖ Holding a plant sale that invites the public to obtain choice rhododendrons*
- ❖ Organizing an annual garden tour of exquisite gardens*
- ❖ Providing plants and labour to beautify Qualicum Beach, Parksville & Ucluelet*
- ❖ Landscaping Rotary Park and other community properties*
- ❖ Providing a culture of friendship and fun and camaraderie for members.*

Over the next few months, as a way of celebrating our contributions to our communities, The Rhodovine will share information from our archives on MARS and its members.

Many thanks to Marilyn Dawson for blowing off the dust and finding these tidbits for us.

MARS - 25 Years Ago

Marilyn Dawson

One summer evening in August, (Aug. 17, 1989) a small group of rhododendron enthusiasts met and by the end of the evening the Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society was born. Here are excerpts from the first newsletter of the Rhodovine:

From newly elected President Everett Jefferson:

It was an exciting evening: 26 people attended and four other couples confirmed their intentions by phone. At the end of the evening we had become the Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society, complete with a full slate of officers and all committee positions filled. (Everett and Pat Jefferson are still members of MARS, along with other founding members, Terry and Verna Richmond, Jim and Jean Greig and Joan Cavers. The late Jim Cavers gave up a fishing date to attend the meeting, bringing greetings and a seed donation from NIRS.

And from the editor of the first newsletter, Sam Cosco:

Not only is this the first issue of the MARS Newsletter but also it is the first column that this correspondent has even had to write. You may be aghast to hear some of the corny puns that went through my mind as I thought of how to begin. Things like: MARS buds from NIRS; MARS takes root in local area; ARS forms new branch. It's a scion of the times.

Maybe if I get them all out (now) they will go away permanently.

Stopping Traffic in Tofino

Ken Gibson in Tofino reports that *Rhododendron* 'Peter Faulk' is a reliable early bloomer....and has been stopping traffic at his home on the West Coast of Vancouver Island. Ken tells me that he often needs to get out a step ladder to photograph his rhododendrons that have grown rampantly in the mild, moist conditions in Tofino.



Rhododendron 'Peter Faulk'



Another beauty in Ken's March garden is *Rhododendron* 'Princess Abkhazi'.



Ken grows this rhododendron which came from a *fortunei* seedling obtained from Warren Berg many years ago.

Mid-Island Floral Art Club
Workshop

Spring Flowers Bumped Up a Notch

Thursday, April 10 at 1:45

St. Stephens Church Hall
150 Village Way,
Qualicum Beach.

Information: 250-937-1350

Upgrading Your Rhododendron Collection

Text and Photos: Linda Derkach

For those not able to attend the MARS March meeting, here are some of the recommendations from Paul Wurz, President of the North Island RS and owner of Hidden Acres Rhododendron Nursery.

Paul is a well-known rhododendron grower, specializing in providing good plants to “rhododendron fanatics” on the island and in BC.

Paul suggested many wonderful hybrids that have proved to be healthy, attractive plants and good bloomers. Here are just a few of his favourites.



Spectacular *Rhododendron* ‘Yeti’ is growing here in the Bill Stipe garden on Whidbey Island. *R.* ‘Yeti’ has won many ribbons for those lucky enough to have a plant!



Rhododendron ‘Noyo Brave’ welcomes a pollinator at Meerkerk Gardens, Washington.



Rhododendron ‘Mindy’s Love’ grows well in the Bill Stipe garden on Whidbey Island.



Rhododendron ‘Viennese Waltz’ was a real show-stopper at Meerkerk Gardens on Whidbey Island.



Rhododendron ‘Saffron Silk’ has earned its place in the garden of Frank Fujioka on Whidbey Garden.



Rhododendron 'Mango Tango' has a lot of fans, here in the Cecil Smith garden just south of Portland, Oregon during the ARS Conference – Vancouver, Washington in 2011.



Rhododendron 'Party Orange' is not often seen. It has long-blooming trusses on a compact, healthy plant.



Rhododendron 'Paprika Spiced' is so spectacular in bloom that admirers ignore the less than healthy-looking leaves the rest of the year. One of the best specimens anywhere can be seen on Fern Road in Qualicum Beach village in mid-May.



Rhododendron 'Fantastica' is an exceptional plant according to Paul. Bill Stipe grows this one in his demonstration garden on Whidbey Island.



Rhododendron 'Lemon Dream' is a compact grower with lovely glossy green leaves.



A perennial favourite, *Rhododendron* 'Hotei' is one of the best yellows ever hybridized.

Rhododendron Show

Saturday, April 26, 2014

Procedures and Regulations

Here are the rules for the annual MARS Rhododendron Show and Plant Sale. Following are details of how and when to enter your trusses (rhododendron blooms).

1. Eligibility

Exhibits in most categories will be accepted from members of MARS and non-members in the area. Note the Novice category is open only to new MARS members (three years or less). All members of a household will be considered to be one exhibitor.

2. Entries

All entries shall have been grown by the exhibitor for at least 6 months and primarily cared for by the competitor. Only one entry of each name in each category per exhibitor please. For example, *R. macabeanum* could be entered in the species category and the appropriate color category, but not twice in the same category. Extra blooms are encouraged but will be for display only. All entries should be taken from plants grown without artificial protection, except for the category 'Protected' which is for the non-hardy.

3. Definitions

- Species: Botanically identified plants originating from seeds or cuttings
- Hybrid: Plants resulting from cross-breeding of more than one species, hybrid or combination thereof
- Truss: A single rachis, i.e. all florets coming from one bud
- Spray: Multi-stems emerging from a single stem
- Hammerhead: Truss with multiple rachides emanating from a single terminal

- Unknowns: A bloom whose identity is unknown to the owner and therefore cannot be judged; Unknowns provide extra color for the Exhibition Table.

4. Exhibitors

- Shall make an effort to identify each truss
- Entries will be accepted from 7 am to 8.30 am at the Parksville Curling Club
- Entries and ribbons may be removed at 2 pm, but not before.

5. Preparation of Trusses

- Blooms should be selected when they are at the peak of their development
- Blooms should be cut from well-watered plants during the coolest part of the day
- Blooms should be carefully groomed. Damaged or dead twigs, leaves, bud scales and flower pips should be removed
- Cleaning or washing of leaves is advised, but no artificial polishing is allowed
- Use suitable containers to retain water during transportation to the show. Chemical additives to preserve bloom freshness can be used.

Participants' guide: Everyone who has blooming plants in their garden is encouraged to bring trusses either for judging or display. All categories, except the Novice category, are open to members and non-members alike. The Novice category is open to MARS members only.

Members should familiarize themselves with the categories and, a few days before the show, look around their garden and see what can be entered. **Categories** are: Red, Pink, White, Blue Collection, Yellow Collection, Foliage, Lax Truss, Spray, Species Large Leaf, Species Small Leaf, Hammerhead, Novice and Protected (such as *madenii* and *vireyas* that need winter protection here).

The Four-Step Process to Enter Blooms in the MARS Rhododendron Show

1. Register

Proceed to the Registration Table, sign in and pick up a competitor number and a number of dots. You will need a dot for each entry.

Proceed to the Labelling Table and leave your list of Truss names. Lists will be taken in order. Please don't shout out entry names. There may be a wait for plant names if a lot of people come at the same time.

2. Put Trusses in Bottles

Nearby is a table with bottles and corks. Take one bottle for each truss, put a numbered dot on the bottom of each bottle, making sure first that it is dry. Don't turn the bottle over; it's full of water. Place a truss into each bottle using a cork to hold it securely if necessary.

3. Label Trusses

Leave trusses on the Work Table and go to the Labelling Table to pick up labels. Take trusses and labels to the Holding Table. At any stage, feel free to ask for help.

4. Position Trusses in their Categories

From the Holding Table, trusses will be taken by a designated volunteer to the judging area and placed in the appropriate category. The label is placed in front of each truss. All categories are clearly labeled.

All trusses must be in place by 8:30 am so judging can start on time. Late entries will go to the Exhibition Table. Please bring as many extra trusses as you can for the Exhibition Table.

Tried and True Formula for Healthy Plants and Stunning Blooms

Here's is the formula recommended by Terry Richmond to help you produce lots of bloom and maintain healthy shrubs.

Terry recommends that the ingredients be mixed well in a wheelbarrow so that the powdered fertilizers occupy the open spaces in the bark mulch, slowing down the release of the fertilizer. As well, Epsom salts can be applied over the growing season when the leaves of your rhododendrons appear to be short of magnesium sulphate.

1 part magnesium sulphate (Epsom salts)
9 parts Borden's Organic Fertilizer
5 parts worm castings, well-rotted manure or good quality compost
5 parts small bark or fish waste composted in bark (Sea Soil, fish compost)

Spread around the drip line and under rhododendrons to about one inch deep, but not close to the stem.

The ingredients of Borden's Organic Fertilizer are:

- soy meal (7-2-1)
- canola meal (5.5-2-1)
- alfalfa powder (2-.5-1)
- blood and bone meal (4-14-0)
- rock phosphate (0--0)
- kelp meal (1-.5-3)
- dolomite lime (calcium and magnesium)

If you want to make your own organic fertilizer from ingredients available locally, here is a formula:

- 4 parts alfalfa meal
- 4 parts canola meal
- 4 parts blood meal
- 2 parts dolomite lime
- 1 part rock phosphate
- 1 part bone meal
- 1 part kelp meal
- 1 part greensand
- Epsom salts can also be added to this mixture.

Garden Journal

Waiting for the Main Event...

Linda Derkach, President

For me, spring is the most exciting time of year in the garden. Don't get me wrong - I love my garden every day of the year. But each day in spring brings a new surprise as familiar treasures come to life once again. And for those of us who love rhododendrons, it is the understory - the supporting cast - that provide excitement while we wait for the big show in April, May and June.



Rhododendron 'Medusa' stands guard over *Chionodoxa forbesii* 'Pink Giant' (above).



A mass of *Puschkinia scilloides* push their way up early in March and provide a delicate jolt of turquoise and white, here beneath *Rhododendron* 'Old Copper'.

These tiny bulbs were planted around the base of pot-grown rhododendrons several years ago, and continue to emerge in March while their companions wait for warmer weather.



Deserving mention again this month is *Helleborus* 'Pink Frost', one of the best new hybrids available. The light pink blossoms of February are turning a deep, rich, rosy pink – stopping all admirers who walk past. And the bonus – all are deer resistant!

Mt. Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society

General Meeting Minutes

Wednesday March 19, 2014

Held at Qualicum Beach Civic Centre at 7:30 pm

GUESTS: Heather Crosson, Deanna Crosson

New Members: William and Angie Wiersma

To start the evening, President Linda Derkach introduced speaker Paul Wurz, President of North Island Rhododendron Society and owner of Hidden Acres Nursery in Campbell River. His presentation, Upgrading Your Rhododendron Collection, focused on some of the introductions of recent years with particular attention to hybridizers Frank Fujioka and Jim Barlup. He described Mr. Fujioka's garden as one of "the nicest gardens on Whidbey Island", and went on to show photos of some of his creations, including *Rhododendron* 'Seaview Sunset', *R.* 'Chemainus' and *R.* 'Vibrant Violet', an *augustinii* cross.

There was also a vivid red hybrid named *R.* 'Cherries & Merlot', the "merlot" referring to the wine-colored indumentum. It was a long program that also touched on some of the plants that have met widespread acceptance in the past, mentioning Brockenbrough's Horizon group, the best known being *R.* 'Horizon Monarch'. Newer ones on the market worth a look are *R.* 'Horizon Snowbird' and *R.* 'Horizon Serenity'. His talk was well-received judging from the questions and comments from the audience.

TRUSS SHOW: Chair Ray Walker outlined the number of volunteers he will need for the April 26 Show and Sale: people to set up on Friday afternoon, others to clean up on Saturday, a few to pick up tables and gather shopping carts, and some to help with the registration and the early morning chores. He stressed the need for everyone exhibiting plants to bring a list separating hybrids and species. All entries must be in the curling rink by 8:30 am.

GARDEN TOUR: Members were urged to sign up as sitters for the Mother's Day Weekend Garden Tour. Kathy Loyer reminded us that sitters get a free ticket.

BUS TOUR: Linda outlined plans for the tour of Victoria gardens on May 5 and 6, and by break time 30 members had already signed up. The overnight tour will visit four private gardens as well as four public gardens and be entertained at a wine and cheese by the Victoria RS in the garden of District One President Ken Webb and his wife, Madeleine. Linda has negotiated a special hotel rate until April 5 at Harbour Towers in Victoria for those who are interested.

TREASURER: In preparation for the motion on the proposed Species Garden at Milner Gardens and Woodland, Bert Harding assured the audience that

the chapter was in sound financial shape and could afford the donation that the executive had unanimously approved. Questions from the floor were centred on MARS annual expenses (about \$4,000) and annual revenue (between \$4,000 and 6,000). At present the chapter has more than \$10,000 in savings.

SPECIES GARDEN: Vice President Tony Ansdell, who has been involved for some time with discussions on the proposed Species Garden, told the group that this project is a District One venture in concert with Milner Gardens. The area has been chosen, paths are being re-directed but there is still a lot of infrastructure work to be done in the initial phase. Meanwhile other chapters have been asked to signify their initial donation. MARS executive unanimously recommends setting aside \$5,000 for the project, and is seeking approval from members. Tony said that funds for the species project would be set aside in a special MARS account, until needed, possibly next fall. Tony is treasurer of District One.

Concern was expressed that the funds would go into the general university funds, but the special MARS Reserve Fund seemed to allay those fears. In addition, Tony said that Milner would contribute matching funds for the initial landscape design. MARS members voted unanimously for the motion as follows: *Moved by Tony and seconded by Doug Kitts that Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society approve the amount of \$5,000 to be donated to Milner Gardens and Woodland for the development of a rhododendron species garden. These funds are to be held in trust by MARS until such time as the terms of release of these funds have been finalized and approved by the ARS chapters involved.*

Meeting adjourned: 10:15 pm