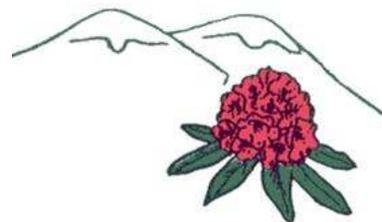


# THE RHODOVINE



THE MOUNT ARROWSMITH

MARS

RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

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Meeting Coordinator- Tony Ansdell

Membership – Tony Ansdell

Milner Gardens - John England

Program Chair – Glen Jamieson

PR - Marilyn Dawson

Refreshments - Anne Gutsche

Sunshine – Maria Bieberstein

## Happy New Year!

### This Month:

## Shannon Berch

on

Soil Biology and

Rhododendrons

Shannon is a research scientist with the BC Ministry of the Environment.

**She will speak on soil organisms and mycorrhizal fungi – critical ingredients for healthy soil and rhododendrons.**

**If you desire healthy rhododendrons and bounteous blooms, you won't want to miss this talk.**

More information on page 3.

## MARS Meetings

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

### Next Meeting

**Wednesday,  
January 14, 2015  
7:30 pm**



With a climate slightly milder than us, the North Island of New Zealand can support exquisite blooms like this *Vireya Rhododendron*, blooming in October at Ayrlies near Whitford, New Zealand.

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## *Upcoming Programs...*

### ❖ *January 14*

- Shannon Berch on Soil Biology and Rhododendrons

### ❖ *February 11*

- Panel of Experts

### ❖ *March 11*

- Douglas Justice, UBC

### *Seedy Saturday 2015* **Volunteers Needed**

Please contact Lori Pross at 752-0196  
or email: [nickorlori@shaw.ca](mailto:nickorlori@shaw.ca)

## *From Your President...*

This year, my winter garden does not disappoint. Two shrubs of *Viburnum x bodnantense* 'Dawn' provide fragrance and food for my very busy resident Hummingbirds. *Helleborus* 'Josef Lemper' is pushing up pure white blooms while *H.* 'Pink Frost' will soon follow. And the promise of an amazing rhododendron season lies in the swelling buds of *Rhododendron* 'Cilpinense' and *R.* 'Ptarmigan' – two prolific early bloomers that are especially suited to the smaller garden. The ARS Convention in Sidney, BC is an exceptional opportunity for all who love beautiful gardens to savour the beauty of Saanich and Victoria gardens. With the New Year upon us, I wish you all a wonderful 2015 with lots of gardening successes and enjoyment.

*All the Best, Linda*

## *Exciting Events*

### *Coming Your Way...*

*Mark Your Calendar Now*

### ❖ **Qualicum Beach Seedy Saturday**

*Saturday, February 7, 2015  
10 am to 3:30 pm*

### ❖ **MARS Rhododendron Show & Sale, Parksville Arena**

*Saturday, April 25*

### ❖ **American Rhododendron Society International Convention, Sidney, BC**

*May 7 to 10, 2015*

### ❖ **MARS Mother's Day Garden Tour**

*May 9 and 10, 2015*

# Shannon Berch:

## *Soil Biology and Rhododendrons*

Shannon will provide an overview of soil organisms and the roles that they play in maintaining healthy soil. Then, she will focus on mycorrhizal fungi, especially those of ericaceous plants such as rhododendrons, and how they affect growth and productivity. She will conclude with observations on how soil can be managed to encourage beneficial soil organisms.

Shannon Berch is a Research Scientist with the BC Ministry of the Environment in Victoria working on soil conservation and soil biota. She is a founding member of the South Vancouver Island Mycological Society and the Truffle Association of BC.



This uprooted tree at Ayrilies has become home to many epiphytes and woodland plants. Finnerty Gardens in Victoria is another exceptional garden that contains a stumpery with ferns and shade-lovers growing happily within the protection of roots and fallen trees.

# ARS Convention in Sidney, BC

If you are planning to attend the 2015 convention in Sidney near Victoria - or are just interested in what is on the program.....you can get all the information you need on line. Just google American Rhododendron Society, click on Activities then Meetings and look at Convention 2015. There's lots of information including the registration form. Or you can obtain a registration form from Marilyn Dawson and mail it in. Contact Marilyn at 752-3694 or email [dawsom@shaw.ca](mailto:dawsom@shaw.ca)

There are 28 gardens on the tour - a convention close to home and not to be missed!



The tranquil beauty of the countryside surrounding Ayrilies in New Zealand - with sheep and lambs and fresh green growth on the trees and in the pasture - is a scene of abundant beauty.

# Work Less, Accomplish More

*As we anticipate the coming gardening season, here is some good advice from the Russell Nursery in North Saanich*

- ❖ **Save time and energy with the right tool for the job. Invest in good tools and keep spades and pruners sharp and clean.**
- ❖ **Reduce raking and bending by piling prunings onto small tarps as you go. Then just drag them to the burn pile or compost.**
- ❖ **Get loads of mulch and soil dumped onto large tarps for quick cleanups.**
- ❖ **Reduce time spent weeding and watering by mulching.**
- ❖ **Use slow release fertilizers - one application of the right stuff and that's it for the year.**
- ❖ **Put heavy pots on dollies with castors and then moving them is a snap.**

And I`ll bet you know lots more labour-saving techniques!! Send them to [lindaderkach@shaw.ca](mailto:lindaderkach@shaw.ca) and I will publish in the newsletter from time to time.

**Don't forget to register for the  
ARS Convention in Sidney, BC.  
Registration forms can be downloaded  
from the website -  
or you can register on line.**

## *Martian Travel Adventures*

It's always interesting to hear about the adventures of our fellow Martians....and amazingly it isn't always about gardens.

MARS Secretary Marilyn Dawson braved some pretty cold weather in June in Newfoundland to discover some Canadian history. Here her sister Nancy heads into a Viking sod house where it was actually warm!!



Marilyn and her sister cruised around this iceberg in St. Anthony's Harbour off the northern tip of Newfoundland.



Photos: Marilyn Dawson

If you have interesting photos from your travels, please send to [lindaderkach@shaw.ca](mailto:lindaderkach@shaw.ca) for inclusion in our newsletter.

# *Ayrlies: A Garden of International Significance*

Story and Photos: Linda Derkach

New Zealanders are a hardy group. Many of the gardens we visited in October were carved out of steep gullies or pony paddocks and rocky terrain. Ayrlies is no exception. Taking its name from the McConnell family farm in Scotland, the garden evolved from a desire to create a large informal country garden, respecting the contours of the land and including plants for all seasons with year-round vistas.



*Callistemon citrinis* was abundant at Ayrlies. Native to Australia, it is too tender to thrive here on Vancouver Island but can be grown in a pot and moved to a cool greenhouse for winter.



This shady, moist woodland was carpeted with *Clivia miniata* – a native of South Africa and stunning as a ground cover.

Ponds and cascades of water figure prominently at Ayrlies, and large trees are grown in family groups. Owner and gardener Bev McConnell has been tending this magnificent garden for 50 years!



Kowhais (*Sophora*) are native trees of New Zealand. Their flowers of dripping gold provide much activity for tuis, wood pigeons and other native birds in spring.



This Echinops was a denizen of the blue and mauve garden at Ayrlires, here spilling over a path. Echinops are marginally hardy here on the island, but have been known to flourish in some seaside gardens in Qualicum.



This lovely purple flower – likely a bulb native to South Africa – dressed up one of the many rockeries at Ayrlires.



Begonias were abundant at Ayrlires.



The pink, blue and mauve garden near the house at Ayrlires boasted magnolias, cineraria, azaleas, ajuga and wisteria



Calliandra (Powderpuff Tree) is native to tropical and subtropical parts of the world.



One of many ponds - with a huge variety of tropical, subtropical and temperate plants nestled around the edges – cascades into the next pond surrounded by huge Australian Tree Ferns – *Dicksonia antarctica*.