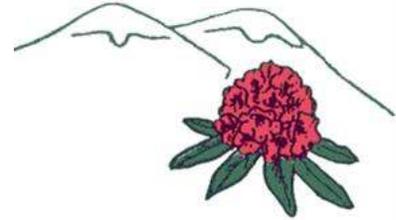


THE RHODOVINE



THE MOUNT ARROWSMITH

MARS

RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

P. O. Box 342

Qualicum Beach. BC

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2015/2016 Executive

President

Linda Derkach

752-3545 lindaderkach@shaw.ca

Vice-President

Glen Jamieson

248-5593 glenj02@yahoo.ca

Treasurer

Ray Walker

248-5138 rrjiffy@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 darryl59ann@telus.net

Kathy Loyer

738-0138 kathyloyer@shaw.ca

Maria Bieberstein

468-7252 abieberstein@telus.net

Bursary – Tony Ansdell

Christmas Party

Dollar Table - Cassy LaCouvee

Newsletter Editor - Linda Derkach

Garden Tour – Kathy Loyer

Truss Show – Ray Walker

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Membership – Tony Ansdell

Milner Gardens - John England

Program Chair – Glen Jamieson

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Refreshments

Sunshine – Maria Bieberstein

This Month:

Our own

Dr. Glen Jamieson

on

Trekking in

Sikkim



Glen with an exquisite specimen of *Rhododendron cinnabarinum* ssp. *cinnabarinum* Blandfordiiflorum Group, Subsection Cinnabarina in the Yumthang Valley.

More inside....Page 2

MARS Meetings

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

Next Meeting:
**Wednesday,
October 14**



Solidago canadensis shines brightly in the September sun against this dark green hedge – one of many autumn flowering perennials that extend garden interest into fall and winter.

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Seeking Rhododendrons in Sikkim

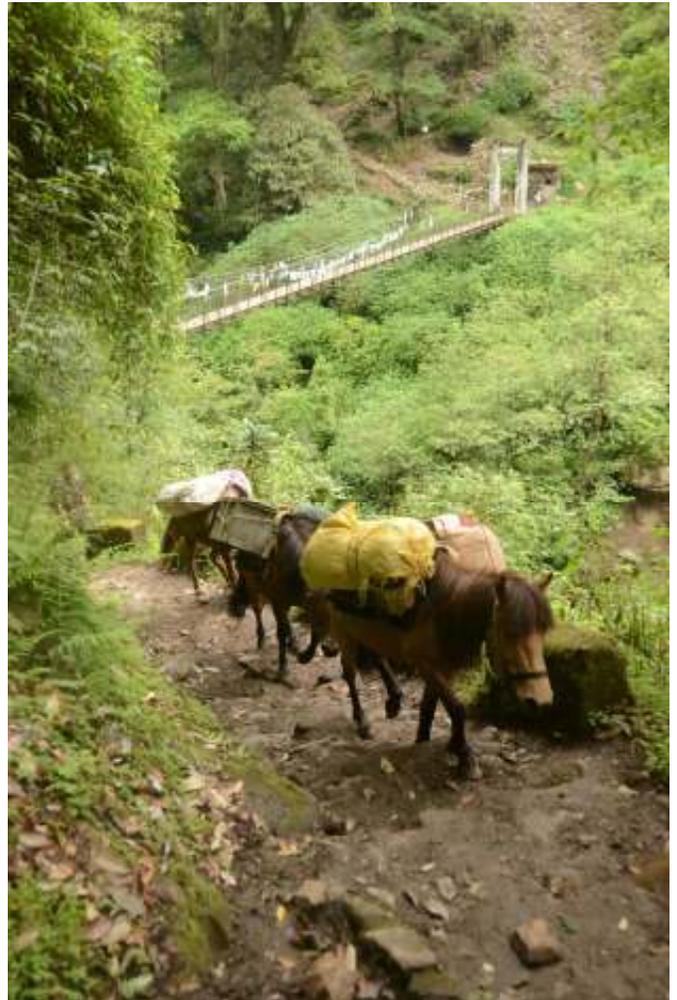
In May 2015, Glen and 17 other rhodoholics travelled with Steve Hootman, RSF, to Sikkim and West Bengal, India, where they planned to search in the wild for the 38 native rhododendron species found there.

The trip extended over three weeks and involved trekking and exploring in three main areas:

- a 6-day Dzongri tenting trek with horses and exploring the Yumthang Valley and
- Singba Rhododendron Sanctuary by SUV in Sikkim
- exploring the Sandakphu Ridge by trekking and ancient land rovers in West Bengal.

In between, they had a few days relaxation in Gangtok, Kalimpong and Darjeeling.

Glen will describe and illustrate his experiences and the culture in all these areas, and will discuss some of the more interesting rhododendrons and other plants found.



The trip occurred one week after the big earthquake in adjacent Nepal, and while Sikkim was not affected significantly by that event, landslides and "shooting stones" were nevertheless exciting occurrences during his trip.

Story and Photos: Glen Jamieson

Upcoming Programs...

❖ *October 14*

- Dr. Glen Jamieson on
Rhododendrons in Sikkim

❖ *November 12*

- Bernie Guyader on
Dwarf Rhododendrons

Please note:

Change of Meeting Date

Our General Meeting for

November only

has been moved from

Wednesday, November 11 to

Thursday, November 12

From Your President...

Linda Derkach

Still on Drought Tolerance...

Well here we are into October, and we are still dealing with Stage 4 watering restrictions in our regional district. After a very busy summer bucketing gray water out to my precious plants, I have finally had a chance to assess any damage as a result of the drought we experienced. Most plants did okay - a few are clinging to life and could look better. In June, in anticipation of a long, hot summer, I added extra quantities of mulch to help preserve precious water. While I fully intend to provide a home to the rhododendrons that I love, I have also checked the Okanagan Xeriscape Association website to see how many

drought-tolerant plants I really do have. While geared more to the Okanagan, much of the information is also relevant for Vancouver Island's east coast.

And I find - surprisingly - that many of my long time favourites are drought tolerant. Some were surprises - like my hostas that managed very well with little water. Epimediums are renowned for their drought-tolerance, along with rosemary, lavender, rugosa roses, cotinus (smoke bush), centranthus, indogofera, geraniums, and of course many garden-worthy native plants such as huckleberry, allium, service berry, flowering currant and salmon berry. My old, well-established rhododendrons did well with very little if no water.

Hydrangeas, however, present a challenge. They are water hogs, and so had to be content with buckets of soapy, greasy shower and dishwasher and were brought back to life from the brink on more than one occasion this summer. In my garden, hydrangeas provide the beauty and interest in summer, and I would be sad indeed if I were forced to give them up. So I have warned them to look forward to more dirty dishwasher next year.

I have also started seeking out more drought tolerant plants to balance out the moisture lovers. I notice that local nurseries are offering more drought-tolerant plants. Just this week I brought home helianthemum (rock rose) and another Geranium 'Rozanne' which is a long-blooming, brilliant blue - still blooming in my garden in October! Hopefully the nurseries will expand their repertoire of drought tolerant perennials next year - as I shall as well.

Species Rhododendrons: Year Round Beauties

Inspired by Bob Zimmermann's talk, we take a second look at species rhododendrons and their contribution to the garden.

Many gardeners strive for a four-season garden - one with something of interest and beauty in every month of the year. Here are just a few of the many hundreds of species rhododendrons that have hairy leaves, unique buds or colourful indumentum - thus attracting much-deserved attention even when not in bloom...and contributing to garden interest all year round.



The moment I laid eyes on the amazing blue foliage and fawn indumentum of *Rhododendron campanulatum* var. *aeruginosum* at Haida Gold, the garden of the late and much-respected Harry Wright in Courtenay, I was hooked. Greer calls it "...the Rolls Royce of foliage..." and I heartily agree. Sadly I have not yet found one for my garden.



The deciduous leaves of *Rhododendron nudipes* turn reddish purple before dropping in fall. Young leaves, shoots and flowers are covered with brown hairs, and are found at the end of the branchlets



Popular *Rhododendron quinquefolium* is a slow-growing deciduous shrub. In spring, leaf margins are edged with red. The bell-shaped white flowers are almost unnecessary for many devotees.



In bloom, *Rhododendron excellens* is a show-stopper. But in the run-up to the big show, the leaves are much admired.



In the dwarf category, none can beat *Rhododendron megeratum* for a proliferation of shiny, hairy dark green leaves that persist all year and seem immune to bugs and diseases. Grow in a raised bed or tree stump.



At Finnerty Gardens in Victoria, *Rhododendron monstrosum* pushes new growth upward. Growing also in Caerhays in Cornwall, England, apparently it is not readily available or grown here.



More tender, *Rhododendron edgeworthii* possesses crinkled leaves and fragrant pinky white flowers. While some brave souls have planted outside – albeit in a protected spot – many specimens are given some winter protection in a cool greenhouse or covered porch. *R. edgeworthii* was found practically around every corner on our recent tour of New Zealand gardens.



At Milner Gardens in Qualicum Beach, *Rhododendron fortunei* ssp. *discolour* is caught by the sun's rays, making it both garden and photo-worthy. Heat tolerant with fragrant flowers of pink to white, *R. fortunei* is a much-admired shrub for the larger garden. Greer states that "... flowers are beautifully formed, falling and brimming over the entire plant, making a springtime display that is unequalled." I love it in or out of bloom.



In the Rutherford Conservatory at the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden near Seattle, *Rhododendron boothii* garners much attention for its reddish, hairy new growth. Recently re-introduced from Arunachal Pradesh, it may be for the serious rhodoholic.



Rhododendron williamsianum is one of the most available and beautiful species, whether in bloom, breaking new bronze leaves or later in summer. A dwarf, compact grower, this exceptional species is used extensively in hybridization. *R.* 'Linda', 'Karen', 'April Glow' and 'Maureen' are all very

beautiful hybrids of *R. williamsianum*. This plant's size, beauty and ease of cultivation make it one that should be in every garden. And below...



Here is *Rhododendron* 'Linda', all floriferous, healthy and easy to grow.



Rhododendron clementinae grows happily in the garden of Bill Stipe on Whidbey Island near Seattle. This hardy shrub has nicely shaped, smooth leaves with a coating of silky indumentum underneath.

Story and photos: Linda Derkach

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Mt Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society
Meeting held at the Qualicum Beach Civic Centre
September 9, 2015 at 7:30 pm

President Linda Derkach opened the first meeting of the 2015-16 season by welcoming the audience and admitting a computer problem would cause a short delay in hearing guest speaker Bob Zimmermann. In the interval, Joanne Hamilton, president of the Mid-Island Floral Arts Club reminded members of the Christmas extravaganza on Nov. 19. Tickets are going fast.

Next, Terry Richmond gave the group an update on the straggly plant that he pruned in the spring and showed off a much bushier *Rhododendron* 'Peppermint Twist' which he then donated to the raffle. Then, with computer problems solved, Glen Jamieson was able to introduce speaker Bob Zimmermann who grows species rhododendrons at his nursery, Chimacum Woods in the Olympic Peninsula and has made several trips to China, Tibet and the Burmese border in search of the rare and endangered.

Species rhododendrons are not particularly highly regarded in that part of the world and are often used for firewood, or bulldozed as the country strives to meet the demands of modern western-style living.

Dr. Zimmermann came loaded with plants, pre-ordered for the most part, which he grows from seed. His presentation, the Siren Song of Species Rhododendrons, provided yet another glimpse into the world of the intrepid plant hunter, complete with bad weather, a sort of zip-line raging river crossing, leeches and a project halted by officialdom. He plans another trip in October with other botanists but not sure of the exact location.

BUSINESS: 1. No one has stepped up to take over looking after the tea break. Linda appealed again for one or two people to take on the job.

2. Joanne Hamilton reminded members that "Forest Fantasies", a creation of the Mid Island Floral Arts Club, is a feature of Milner Gardens and Woodland for the fall season.

3. Linda passed out forms for everyone to tell her about their favorite rhododendron, a newsletter project.

4. Tony Ansdell reminded members it was time for membership renewal. The cost to each member is \$30, but with the adverse exchange rate the cost to the club is considerably more. Some clubs have raised the rates, but MARS has chosen to subsidize membership instead.

5. Marilyn Dawson floated the idea of a fall get-together picnic. A show of hands indicated considerable interest, but no date was set.

Draw prizes: Door prize, *Rhododendron fictolacteum*, Donna DeBoer; Other prizes: *R.* 'Peppermint Twist', Barbara Delgatty; *R.* 'Canadian Sunset', Dan Schwarz; *R. bureavii* x *R. agastum*, Sandra Hemsworth; *R.* 'Conroy', Terry Richmond, *R. williamsianum*, Pat Jefferson.

Meeting adjourned: 9:25 pm

An Invitation...

Mid Island Floral Art Club

Thursday, October 8 at 1:45
St. Stephens United Church Hall
150 Village Way
Qualicum Beach

Demonstration for this meeting:

Vertical design:
Making a Thanksgiving
Table Piece

Information?
Call Joanne 250-757-8969

Qualicum Beach

Seedy Saturday 2016

Plans are underway for February 6

For those of you who are new to the area, Seedy Saturday in Qualicum Beach was started in 2002 by locals Joy & Keith Smith, along with Kim Hammond, Sally Shivers and Linda Rehlinger. The original idea behind this was to educate local gardeners on how to save seeds. These founders are still very active in our community.

From a start with only the main hall and one meeting room in 2002, this event now utilizes the whole Civic Center, inside and out, for the many vendors, demonstrations, talks and of course The Seed Room. Attendance has gone from 900 in the first year to over 2,500 in 2015. The proceeds from the event go to local charitable organizations.

Seedy Saturday is scheduled for **February 6, 2016** and the themes are: **Identifying the Source of Problems in Our Gardens** and **Conserving Water**. More information will be forthcoming on speakers and times on our website:

qualicumbeachseedysaturday@gmail.com
Needless to say, planning and organizing for such a large event has to start early. Many of you are probably thinking that Feb 6, 2016 is a long time away, but it is amazing how the weeks and months melt away with our busy schedules!

In order for Seedy Saturday to continue the great successes of past years, the assistance of many enthusiastic volunteers is a must. Please join us - the work shifts are only 1 ½ hours to 2 hours long...morning or afternoon.

Please contact Lori Pross
@ 250-752-0196 or
nickorlori@shaw.ca to volunteer.

In January, we will confirm the participation of those who volunteer with a follow-up call and let everyone know in which area they have been assigned.

Thanks

A note from Kathy Claxton, Master Gardener and organizer of the Seed Exchange Room:

Dear Seedy Saturday Participants!!!

While doing your fall clean up don't forget to save seeds from your flowers and vegetables for the Seedy Saturday seed swap. Trade saved seeds for a coupon and use that coupon to trade for other saved seeds.

The More you Reap - the More you Sow!

It's an amazing day with a large variety of seeds to choose from our local home growers.

Any questions, please see Kathy Claxton at the monthly QBGC meetings.

The Alpine Gardeners of Central Vancouver Island

present

Dr. Hans Roemer

To speak on

Alpines of the Rocky Mountains

Monday, October 26th, 2015, 1-3 p.m.

**(doors open 12:30), East Hall, QB Civic Centre,
747 Jones Street. \$5 at door includes entry in
prize draw & coffee/tea**



Alpine vegetation in the Rockies is subject to a climatic regimen different from what we have on the coast, with summers earlier, but sometimes also lasting longer than what we experience on the island, especially this year. In the Rockies we see alpine communities stretch over large areas. Dr. Roemer's recent impressions are from areas near the northern and southeastern boundaries of the province. Despite the great distance, they have many floral elements in common, even though they are combined in different plant communities, many of them of spectacular beauty.

Born and raised in southern Germany, Hans apprenticed in horticulture and studied landscape architecture & landscape ecology. He earned a PhD in plant ecology from the University of Victoria in 1972. He worked in conservation with the provincial Ecological Reserves Program & Provincial Park System. Since retiring in 2002, he has been working as a botanical consultant, mainly in rare plant inventories and monitoring. A member of the Vancouver Island Rock and Alpine Garden Society for over 30 years, he has led many club outings to the mountains of Vancouver Island & northern Washington State. Most of his gardening is with bulbs and other drought-tolerant plants. He is a contributor to Alpine Plants of British Columbia, Alberta & Northwest North America by Pojar and MacKinnon (Lone Pine, 2013).

More info? Valerie at 250-594-4423 or Melanson.valerie@gmail.com

(photo of potentilla, smelowskia & myositis by Hans Roemer)