This Month:

MARS Potluck Windup Party
June 25
at the home of
Al and Maria
Bieberstein
Nanoose Bay

Saturday, June 25 at
5:00 pm

Please watch your
email for
information and
details to come.

Late-bloomer
*Rhododendron 'Old Copper'*
graces the garden in June.

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In the Garden of
Vel Rhodes & Dan Schwarz

The Alberni Valley boasts many beautiful gardens – including that of Port Alberni MARS members Vel and Dan who grow many rare and beautiful specimens….here are a few….

Cypripedium formosanum

Dentaria californica

Fritillaria meleagris

Veltheimia bracteata

Glaucidium palmatum
Lysichiton camtschatcensis
Its cousin is our native Skunk Cabbage.

Myosotidium Hortensia
This Chatham Island Forget-me-not is found all over New Zealand.

Uvularia grandiflora is a favourite woodlander here on Vancouver Island.

And on Salt Spring Island....

During our Salt Spring Island tour, Tony and Peter take a break under this beautiful pink-flowered robinia.

Photos: Vel Rhodes and Dan Schwarz
General Meeting – May 11, 2016
Held at the Qualicum Beach Civic at 7:30 pm

Minutes

The last meeting before the summer hiatus brought out a large crowd of about 70 people eager to hear Bernie Guyader’s presentation on growing the smaller rhododendrons. His interests cover alpine rhododendrons, rock gardens and more recently bonsai and he touched on all three subjects as he passed on tips about growing various cultivars.

TREASURER: Ray Walker gave a brief financial report for the year, noting that both the hugely successful Rhododendron Show and Sale and the Garden Tour had put the chapter on a sound financial footing. Sales at the Rhodo Show were up 18% over last year and while all vendors had not yet reported, there were indications that the Garden Tour was also somewhat ahead of last year’s figures. He also had received a cheque for $2,622.53, MARS’ share of the profits from the District 1 Convention in Sidney a year ago, which is earmarked for the species garden at Milner Gardens and Woodland.

GARDEN TOUR: Kathy Loyer thanked all the volunteers who worked on the tour. The weather was great encouraging ticket sales; visitors and home owners were thrilled with the artists and musicians performing at some of the gardens. Museum and NIWA officials were pleased with the turnout to their establishments.

NEW BUSINESS: 1. John England conducted the election of officers at the annual general meeting. Maria Bieberstein and Don Bridgen are retiring as directors. Sherry Thompson and Bob Baird were elected unanimously for a two-year term. Other members of the executive still have one term to serve. Complete slate is: President Linda Derkach, Vice President Glen Jamieson, Secretary Marilyn Dawson, Treasurer, Ray Walker; Directors, Tony Ansdell, Ann DeBrincat, Kathy Loyer, Sherry Thompson and Bob Baird.
2. The June windup pot luck will be held at the home of Al and Maria Bieberstein on Saturday, June 25. More information later.
3. Linda Derkach reminded members to be at the Civic Centre by 6 am on Thursday, May 19 to catch the bus for the Salt Spring Island tour. There is also a pickup at the Arlington Pub for those living in the Nanoose area.
4. Milner has extended an invitation to all the island rhododendron chapters to an Open House on Tuesday, May 17 from 6 pm to 7:30 to view the proposed new species layout and outline upcoming projects.
5. MARS has two new members and one associate, bringing the total to 62 memberships and 9 associates.
6. Just back from the ARS convention in Williamsburg, Linda Derkach said Parksville has been suggested as a possible site for a 2018 fall conference. The idea was greeted favorably by a show of hands, although there was some suggestion that 2019 would allow more time to plan.

PRIZES: Carol Hansen won the door prize donated by Bernie Guyader, *Rhododendron stenopetalum linearifolium*; other winners were: Jane Walker, Al Bieberstein, Barbara Kulla, Sandra Hemsworth and Tony Ansdell.

Meeting adjourned: 9:50 pm

Special Evening at Milner Gardens

This large gathering of rhododendron enthusiasts included members from most of the rhododendron clubs on Vancouver Island. We were here to learn more about progress on the creation of the Rhododendron Species Garden at Milner Gardens and Woodland. Much progress was evident and plans were outlined by Geoff Ball of Milner to move the project to early completion.

Photo: Craig Clark
MARS Garden Tour: 
A Spring Tradition

Story and Photos: Linda Derkach

Once again, our Mother’s Day Weekend Garden Tour was the event of the season. Even more than fabulous gardens - music, art and floral displays had visitors enthralled. Here are some horticultural highlights that were enjoyed by approximately 400 garden-lovers.

Helianthenum offers gray/green leaves with orange flowers, and is a nice contrast to other hardy, sun-loving rock garden plants.

This garden gazebo is a cozy, comfortable place to sit and admire the glorious shrubs and deer resistant plants that adorn this garden.

Hostas do well in pots, and this one seems to be thriving on steroids.

Golden racemes of laburnum grace this arbour, and mix well with wisteria and other climbers.
Succulents, rocks, vines, honeycombs and other natural treasures combine to create this unique floral arrangement.

A variety of ferns and other shade-lovers are grouped together in pots on this patio.

The Frog Prince lives among these lovely ferns and is a creation of Laurene Ebbett. The Mid Island Floral Art Club delighted visitors at this garden with extraordinary floral and garden art during the garden tour.

Gardens having Rhododendron ‘Horizon Monarch’ this year were blessed with a multitude of luscious orange to golden blooms – seen here in the Cockburn garden.

Enkianthus campanulatus is a treasure – graceful branches strung with tiny, exquisite bell-shaped flowers – a great companion for rhododendrons.
The delicate fronds of *Sorbaria sorbifolia* contrast nicely with this dark-leafed rodgersia in the Garness garden.

Great plant combinations are a specialty of this garden, as seen below with epimedium, lavender and aubretia in the rock garden.

Barbara Kulla is an alpine enthusiast, with many troughs of creatively combined rock garden plants as well as a host of lovely rhododendrons to admire – like the coral beauty below.

This immaculate and private oasis is the creation of gardeners who know how to combine plants, taking them “to the next level”.
Old wooden pallets offer endless possibilities for the creative gardener. Painted a glorious blue, this pallet becomes home to cascading lobelia! If you try this yourself, don’t forget to provide drainage for your plants.

Our traditional potluck wind-up after the tour was enjoyed by many guests and members.

A water garden is a key component of a Certified Wildlife Habitat – a designation offered by the National Wildlife Federation. Gardens earning this award provide food, water, cover and places to raise young. The native garden at North Island Wildlife Recovery is such a place, and is an excellent place to learn how to do the same in our own gardens.

*Story and Photos: Linda Derkach*
The McCarthy garden arranged for all 150 roses to be in bloom in a park-like setting. *Rosa* 'Easy Does It' is a smashing coral/orange bloomer.

This enormous clump of calla lilies wowed the visitors!

Raindrops on roses….become diamonds when the sun breaks through.

Susan Bloom’s garden arranged for this robust lavender and lilac-coloured rhododendron to greet visitors at the garden gate.

A charming garden cottage swathed in pink rambling roses welcomed our hard-working Garden Tour chair Kathy Loyer.
Striking combinations are a specialty of the Bloom garden – **Choisya ‘Sundance’** (Mexican Orange) and this electrifying pink rhododendron caught our attention and were much admired. A bonus: both are deer resistant in this part of the garden where wildlife are welcome.

This is the view that we enjoyed while eating our lunches and sipping on delicious, home-made, organic apple juice supplied by our gracious host.

In the protected garden, hostas of all shades thrive along with ligularia – and together make a striking combination.

This vine-covered stroll from the garden to the sea is lined with *Choisya ternata* and *C. ‘Sundance’*, red Japanese maples, willows and wisteria. Plants at deer height are resistant to nibbling.

The Spiers garden is home to many irises – most of which are not a favourite of the local deer population and are mostly drought-tolerant on this water-restricted island.
Deer love roses – but are not inclined to climb a sturdy arbour. This combination of yellow, peach, orange and coral roses high over our heads was stunning in the Spiers garden.

Ted Baker is one of the premier iris experts and growers in Canada. His field of sale irises, and his personal garden are magnificent.

Exquisite irises of every colour abound in this sunny field. Bearded irises are generally drought tolerant.

Show-stopping *Rhododendron* ‘Vulcan’s Flame’ and *Cotinus coggygria* make a fine pair in the Baker garden - set against the forest.

A lovely combination of blue, mauve and purple irises brings to mind Monet’s garden at Giverny - as does the field below.

Thank you to the garden owners who welcomed us, and Sue who is President of the Salt Spring Garden Club for arranging this lovely day!