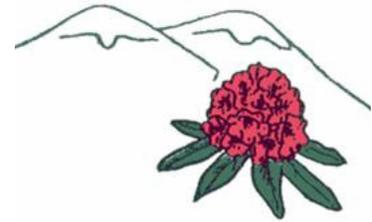


THE RHODOVINE



THE MOUNT ARROWSMITH RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

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Wednesday December 5th

Christmas Party

Dec. 5th. 5.30pm at the Rotary Hall on the corner of Fern Road and Beach in Qualicum Beach.
* Turkey is arriving from over the Hump.

* Members are asked to bring their favourite party recipes to share for the pot luck. Coffee and tea will be provided. Bring your own beverages. No need to bring either china or cutlery.

* There will be several door prizes
* Each Member is asked to bring a wrapped gift of up to \$10 to join in the gift exchange game.

* There are three special plants for the Xmas "door prizes"

R. sulphureum, a donation from Ann Gutsche, and two Gomer Waterers.

* Items for the food bank will also be collected.



MARS Meetings

Second Wednesday of the Month
7:30 pm
Qualicum Beach Civic Centre

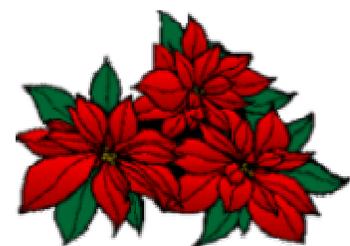
January Meeting

The January Speaker is Glen Patterson, who will be talking about rooftop gardens as in condo rooftops.

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Photographs by
Susan Lightburn





Message from our President

"No talk about Rhododendrons, no gardening stories or advice this month. This is the final edition of the Rhodovine for 2007, tempus fugit! I want to wish all club members and their friends an enjoyable Christmas season. My hope for the New Year is that you will have Peace and Health throughout 2008.

See you at the Christmas Party, Wednesday, 5 December, 5.30pm at Rotary Hall in Qualicum Beach.

John England"

Events

Milner Christmas Magic

Nov 30 - Dec 2, Dec 7 - 9 and Dec 14 - 16. 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm

A family oriented festival of lights and music in the Garden. Admission by donation.

Sunshine

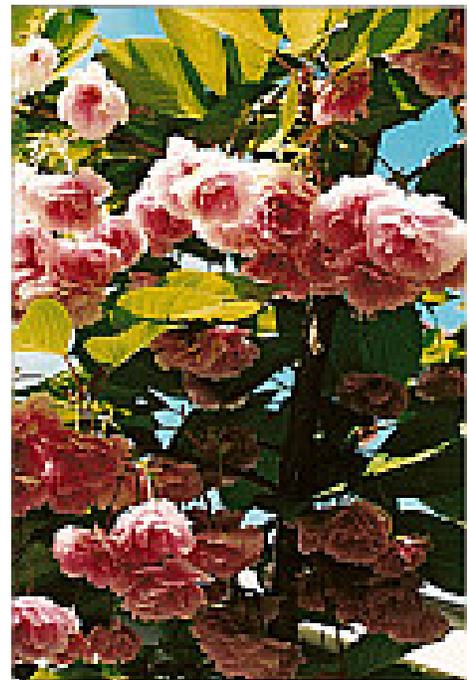
If you are aware of any members who are either unwell or in hospital let Marie Bieberstein know 468-7252

abieberstein@telus.net

Member's Corner

Come out and have fun with your club. Can you HELP. We need people to assist with all kinds of activities to make your club run well. Come and share your talents.

'Spring is just around the corner'



**Prunus serrulata "Shirofugen"
Photographed by Lorraine Peters**

Minutes of the General Meeting

Wednesday, Nov.14, 2007.

MEETING: Called to order at 7:30 p.m.

As this was a joint meeting with the Nanaimo chapter, there were many visitors. There were no minutes from the October meeting, because MARS members traveled to Nanaimo for that meeting.

BUSINESS ARISING: None

OTHER BUSINESS: As he welcomed all visitors, John England stressed that the business meeting would be short because of the joint meeting which included visitors from Duncan and Victoria. The turnout was exceptional with the visitors possibly outnumbering MARS members.

Members were encouraged to talk to Art Lightburn if they had a speaker to recommend

They were reminded that the Christmas Party is on Dec. 5 at Rotary Hall on Fern Road in Qualicum Beach.

REFRESHMENTS: Barbara Kulla's goodies for the crowd came from: Margot Moser, Ann Robertson, Maria Bieberstein, Susan Lightburn, Myrna Schebel, Barbara Kulla, Ann Gutsche and Marilyn Dawson.

CORRESPONDENCE: There was none to report

TREASURER'S REPORT: In a jovial exchange and to satisfy the president of the Nanaimo chapter, Tony Ansdell reported a healthy account balance of \$6,509.88 at the end of October, before membership payments are sent to ARS.

PROGRAM CHAIRMAN: Art Lightburn outlined plants available for the raffle and the door prize. Door prize was *R. Fabia x bureavii*. Raffle plants were; *R. Star dancer*, *R. pachysanthum*, three *fortunei*, donated by Ken and Madeleine Webb from Victoria, *R. Ken Janeck*, *R. Black sport*, and three plants donated by Al Campbell of Duncan, *R. sutchuenense*, *R. catacosmum* and *R. degroonianum x ssp heplanerum x macabeum*.

SPEAKER: Highlight of the evening was Peter Wharton, curator of the David Lam Asian Garden at UBC. Although he had just returned from a three- week trip to North Vietnam, Wharton based his talk on a recent trip to Szechuan and an area in southwest China. He is on a mission to save endangered plants from being extinguished when industrial expansion overcomes the area and planned hydro dams are built in that part of the country. Some of these plants have never been seen in the west, not just rhododendron, but some maples, viburnum and magnolias, to name a few. He stressed the need to tap into various university grants to raise funds to train Chinese field botanists to collect both data and seeds.

His slide program, enthusiastically received, illustrated his talk, showing almost a mystic scenery in this mountainous region, reminiscent of old Chinese paintings.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30p.m. Our next meeting is the Christmas Party, Dec 5 at 5:30 p.m.



F is for Favourites

Norman Todd

In the end, it just comes down to personal taste, or prejudice.'

If I were choosing twelve rhododendrons for a city-sized new garden blessed with a couple of established trees to give summer shade, what would they be? With a choice from over 2000 or 3000 obtainable hybrids and from the 400 or so species that can be grown here, the selection is indeed difficult. There are a lot of variables to sift through; yet it does not involve a huge amount of risk, as there are so many good doers. In the end, it just comes down to personal taste, or prejudice.

The tallest rhododendron that one can get is about 2 metres high when ten years old. One must remember that rhododendrons live longer than we do and they keep growing. However, for most gardeners their vision does not stretch beyond ten years and neither does their patience. My first choice therefore is guaranteed not to bloom until at least it is twenty. We probably have room for only one or two tree-like rhododendrons (actually I end up with three, two of them biggies and that is why gardeners are usually classed as collectors rather than landscapers), so we have to pick ones that we will want to look at each and every day and ones that will impress the sophisticatedly superior visitors to our garden.

So to start, I would opt for *macabeanum*. Its leaves are 20 to 25 cm long and half as wide and they have whitish indumentum on the undersides. It is effective, therefore, to plant it where, in time, we can walk under the foliage. The tops of the leaves are dark green and shiny. The flowers vary from cream to a strong yellow. In one of Peter Cox's books he advises that the paler forms should be avoided. This is, by and large, a gratuitously useless bit of advice as most plants of *macabeanum* that are available in nurseries are grown from seed and it is very seldom that a blooming sized plant is available. If such a plant were available, it would be a sizable one and would involve the physical difficulty of moving the plant and the painful financial difficulty of moving the buyer's funds to the grower's. The best one can do is to get a known clone that is cutting grown or grafted or, more likely, seedlings that have been hand pollinated. *Macabeanum* blooms in March and we must remember that when choosing the next eleven.

I really do think we have to have two more big rhododendrons. Having three statuesque specimens gives us vertical structure in the landscape and leaves room for incorporating all the choice under planting that will give complementary colour and texture all year round. In this idyllic setting there are no deer, or if there are, they are either concrete or have been to Jenny Craig's.

The other two Rhodos that I would pick would be '**Lem's Monarch**' and the pink form of *auriculatum*. This latter plant has large, long, somewhat fuzzy leaves that in themselves make a statement. *Auriculatum* blooms in August. Our garden will be without rhododendron bloom for a maximum of only three months if we make the appropriate choices, as we will see. '**Lem's Monarch**' is a May/June bloomer. The large flowers are soft pink with a darker pink picotee rim. We have to have a bloom in July and I would pick the red hybrid '**Good News**'. It is not too large, will take some sun and will look good with light coloured annuals.

To start the rhododendron season I don't think you can do better than '**Lee's Scarlet**'. The most popular early bloomer is '**Rosamundi**'. Why '**Lee's Scarlet**' does not hold this honour I have never understood. It probably has the same parents as '**Rosamundi**' but has a deeper coloured flower and better meets our cultural need for Ho Ho Ho hues at Christmas. **Lee's Scarlet** will give us that, not in great amount as it blooms for close to four months, from November to March with a succession of opening blossoms rather than in one big splurge.

Continued on next page.

Our garden during the short sombre days of the early year will be brimming with colour. There will be snowdrops and daffodils and tulips (no deer), hellebores and primroses and witch hazel and cyclamen. In one of the sunnier spots, one that we see or pass by every day, I would place a **'Snow Lady'**. In the shade it will be leggy but with good light it becomes an igloo, a white mound on which nary a leaf will be seen. 'Snow Lady', being a lepidote, does not have large trusses but often has three or even four flower clusters at each branch terminal. The chocolate coloured anthers give a startling contrast. Close to 'Snow Lady' I would put a **'Razorbill'**, my wife's favourite rhododendron. In fact, I would put three 'Razorbills'; it is small. It has the most unusual tubular pink firecrackers, borne in profusion. This is a special plant for me as I brought it back from Scotland many years ago and propagated a few that fortunately went to better homes. I lost the original plant but got a little one back, an offspring of my offspring.

Now we are at the spring solstice and the choices are exorbitant. I think we have to go with the masses and choose the most popular of the reds, 'Taurus'. Great dark, shiny, tough foliage, beetroot buds and flowers of a pure primary red with not the slightest hint of blue. But because it is a big plant and we are running out of space, I may have to veto it and go for the more modest sized **'Rubicon'**. It has the same flower colour and has the kind of dark, rugose foliage that meets the criteria of the growers of perennial herbaceous plants.

You will note that this chosen baker's dozen has no evergreen or deciduous azaleas. I'm afraid that this exercise is just like a prime minister choosing a cabinet; someone has to be left out and the political wrath of those not represented will have to be faced, although never mollified. Probably over represented (c.f. Prince Edward Island) are the lepidotes and my next five choices are of this ilk. These are **'Ginny Gee,'Blaney's Blue', *rigidum*, *hanceanum*, and *campylogynum*.**

'Ginny Gee' is certainly one of the best small rhododendrons to grace our gardens. Draped over a big rock or wedged between two big rocks, it is a complete synthesis of realism and abstraction. Pink and white, inside and out, it is a profusion of contentment. *Hanceanum* is more subdued but if anything a neater plant than 'Ginny Gee' and after its show of smallish pansy-like cream flowers it gives a rich ambience to its locale with its bronzy new leaves.

We bemoan the lack of a true gentian blue in the genus rhododendron but we will cavil less when we see a four or five foot 'Blaney's Blue' in flower, a potential deadheading nightmare. Alongside this place the blue leaved form of *rigidum* is selected, the one with globs of white flowers and chocolate anthers; in contemporary landscaping parlance, 'colour echoing' our earlier 'Snow Lady'.

The last little gem of a lepidote is *campylogynum*. This species comes in the tiniest of forms and ranges to those that may get to a meter tall. I don't care which form is chosen. They are all choice. Just make sure it has perfect drainage, never dries out and never even catches a glimpse of granular fertilizer.

I suppose it would be like having a missing front tooth if we did not have a stereotypical medium sized May blooming full trussed pink show off. There are hundreds that would fill the bill. I give my vote to **'Fantastica'**. There is colour gradation in the flower, it is a dependable bloomer, is not weevil fodder and does not fade too badly. I could be easily persuaded to go for other varieties and I may pass this one on when it reaches its late teens to another compulsive fanatic who has more space.

We also must have a really good yellow and without question my choice is **'Nancy Evans'**. Not too big, wider than tall and as reliable a bloomer as Herb Robert. Its buds are brick red opening to a hot yellow. Nancy is a rent payer if ever there was one.

There we are, selection is made. Only the companions, the lilies and the hostas and the roses and clematises need to be chosen. Our dozen has stretched to fourteen but is that not the way of the world? We always have to squeeze in just a couple more than we originally planned for and no doubt a home will still have to be found for the odd impulse purchase and all those countless indigents we win in raffles. I hate it when the server in a restaurant admonishes me to "Enjoy". But how else can I conclude than with that admonition?



All these beautiful pictures are **fall 2007** at the Little and Big Qualicum fish hatcheries. Photographs by Susan Lightburn

Editor's Corner

My computer copies don't do the originals justice. However they are still outstanding. Does anyone else have their favourite photos to share with us?

Happy Holidays

