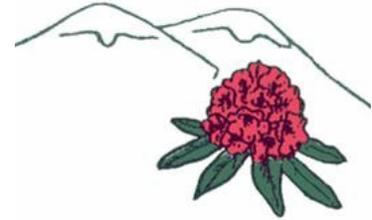


THE RHODOVINE



THE MOUNT ARROWSMITH RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

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January Speaker

Glen Patterson, is like a lot of gardeners who decide, as they age, to move into condos. Most don't take their gardens with them but Glen managed to transfer many of his seaside West Vancouver plants, including a 100-year old maple, to a rooftop overlooking the harbour and Stanley Park.

A member of the Dendrology Society (that's the scientific study of trees), he worked with architects, engineers and his own gardener to effect the move that has created a garden with three Koi pools, waterfalls and stream bed along with a lot of his favorite trees and shrubs. His topic will be Reaching New Heights in Gardening.

Although rooftop gardening is not a priority in this area, growing in containers is growing in popularity, particularly with those who have outgrown their garden space. Glen says he learned a lot about soil mix, including porosity, permeability and fertility in his search for a successful garden. "Many of my trees and shrubs are over 40 years old and one maple is actually over 100 years old. Yet these normally fast-growing plants are confined to my small garden and they seem to be healthy and happy."

Photo above taken by Glen Patterson is a view from his garden.

MARS Meetings

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

February Meeting

Art Lightburn has arranged for another popular panel, this time on the various aspects of gardening.

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District Meeting on Glen Patterson's roof garden

Speakers

If you know of any speakers or would like to hear a particular topic, please contact our program chairman Art Lightburn.

President's Message

Happy New Year to all MARSians. I trust that your year has started well?

I am happy to tell you that Cassy LaCouvee has graciously accepted the role of MARS Historian, recording the doings of the club year by year. Cassy takes over from Jean Greig, who has performed these historical duties on behalf of the club for many years. Thank you Jean, and thank you Cassy.

2008 is the year of the 'Species Study Programme' in District 1, with a parallel program taking place on Vancouver Island. No doubt we will be hearing more about this as it evolves!

2008 is also the Chinese Year of the Rat. I earnestly hope that is not detrimental to your properties or gardens!!

New Years Day also marks the beginning of your rhododendron fertilization program, at least in my world. Remember that you should fertilize from 1 Jan to 1 July (monthly). That way, you will have wonderful trusses to enter into the 'Truss Show' competitions and to show off your 'Rhodoland' at the 'MARS Garden Show'.

Don't forget that in February we will be having our 'panel discussion' with a group of local experts. Brilliant, incisive questions about the vagaries of rhododendron maintenance are welcomed by our distinguished panel, so I encourage you all to start compiling a list of interesting horticultural posers.

See you all on 9 January 2008.
John England



Cassy our new Historian (right) with Mary

Species Study Program

Species Rhododendron.



R. albrechtii

4', 15F, E, 4/3/3

Photo by Susan Lightburn

The registration for the Species Study Program on Vancouver Island is underway.

Notable speakers include:

Steve Hootman -Rhododendron Species Foundation

Joe Harvey

Glen Jamieson -Vireya collection

Norman Todd -Victoria Nurseryman.

Subject focus will be identification of Species, the horticultural aspects of the different species that can and are being grown on Vancouver Island.

Victoria March 15-16 and 2 days

Qualicum April 5 - 6

The lectures and garden tours will be limited to 30 participants - 6 from each of the Vancouver Island chapters at a cost of \$120.00 for all 4 Sessions.

For information on dates and location, please phone or e-mail Art Lightburn.

Telephone 250-468-7516

Email slightbu@shaw.ca

Christmas Party



Choir mistress Brenda.

Now THAT was a party!!!

In November, President John England exhorted members to bring interesting vegetables to the Christmas Party, and being loyal followers of their leader, they did just that. There were so many vegetables they had to take up some of the salad table. It was as if no matter what else a member might be bringing, a vegetable would be part of the offering. Ann Robertson, ensconced in the kitchen, did Trojan work keeping dishes warm and warming up the chilled ones and finding places for everything...

There were lots of other goodies too. The turkey, of course, was brought as is their tradition by Terry and Velma Richmond. There was a large selection of appetizers, several tasty salads and an array of desserts that could not be passed by. It was a party not to be missed, although sadly quite a few missed it. Club members mingled at will during the happy hour that stretched maybe a little bit, but since everyone was chatting and having a good time, there was no hurry to eat and run.

Earlier in the day Xmas Party chairman Maria Bieberstein and her crew, Barbara Kulla, Marilyn Dawson, and Cassie Lacouvee dragged out the tables, set them up and decorated the

hall. Earlier in the week they had created centerpieces for each table with all-natural materials provided by Maria and Barbara. At the end of the meal, everyone turned up their chair to see who got to take home the table decoration.

After dinner came the annual sing song and while no one claimed to play the piano, it really wasn't needed. Members, with well-oiled voices, belted out carols with gusto. Then came the gift exchange and, it happened again this year, the most gaily decorated and interesting looking parcels were the ones that members clambered for. The rule was you can only lose your gift twice and then your gift is off-limits, so finally Arlene England got to keep something. There's a lot of laughter and silliness in this segment that adds to the evening fun.

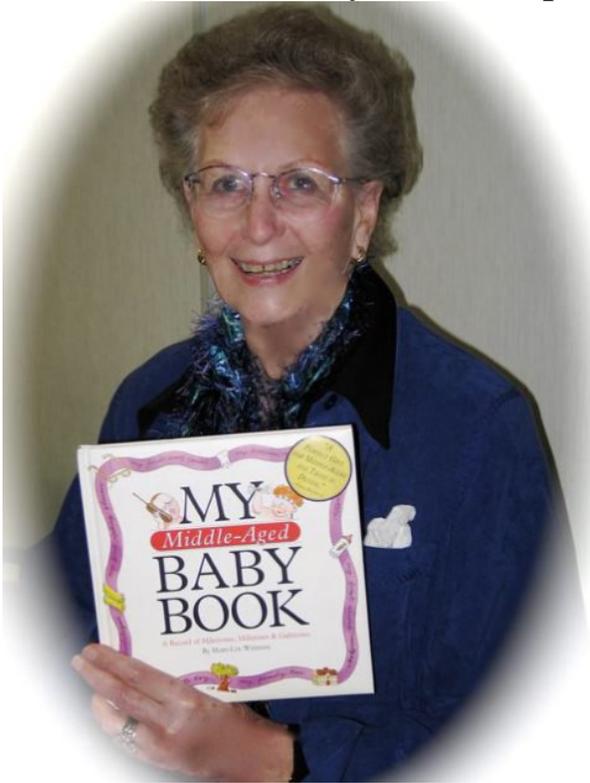
At the end of the evening Bill and Kay Burgoyne loaded up their vehicle with members' donations to the SOS food bank and later Maria took the door prize earnings, \$84, to the SOS.

That left nothing to do but the cleanup; it was a breeze. Everyone pitched in and Maria and her crew thank all those who helped.



Kitchen Elves
Ann, Barbara, Marie and Marilyn

All in all, it was a very successful party.



“I don’t believe a word you are telling me”



Confusion in the choir



A good time was had by all.

Book Review (by Mary Palmer)

Gardening with Foliage Plants,
Leaf, Bark and Berry

By Ethne Clarke, photos by Clive Nichols
Abbeville Press, 1996, 1997

This is a wonderful book to peruse in autumn, when many of the brightly coloured tree leaves are attracting our attention, and in winter, when we make note of interesting bark and berries on our walks through gardens and parks.

"There is more to any plant than just its flowers despite their tendency to steal the limelight in nursery catalogues and in the minds of many gardeners. Colored stems, beautiful bark, striking leaf shapes, and vibrant foliage are just some of the characteristics that continue to adorn a garden before and after its flowering season. Here, Ethne Clarke's fresh ideas and Clive Nichol's stunning, specially commissioned photographs combine to produce an innovative book that will be an inspiration to all gardeners." That says it all. This book encourages individuals to look beyond the transient flowering potential of plants and to experiment with leaf shape, plant form, and shades of green. There are outstanding photos of trees and shrubs in garden settings, and individual leaves and bark, as well as sketches and paintings of plants and gardens. Grasses, berries, gardens in containers, a variety of inspirational ideas that could keep a person happy until spring comes again.

The plant directory lists plants according to colour - green, grey-green, blue-green, yellow, orange, red, purple, autumn colors, bark, stem, and berry - and suggestions as to where to site particular plants. I borrowed the book from the Campbell River Library, and wish that I could keep it all winter. Ask for the book at your library, or buy it - it's worth it.

“The calendar says this is the beginning of winter but these pictures say Spring!”

Photo from Anne Debrincat.

Why Prune

Undoubtedly there are numerous gardeners who shudder at the thought of inflicting so much as a small cut on any unsuspecting plant.

Look at the forest around us on Vancouver Island and the vast fields of untouched trees living quite happily in their un-pruned state! Not so you say! Look a little closer and one will see the constant ‘natural’ pruning process of ‘Mother Nature’ in action. Wind, weather and wild animals are forever reshaping and resizing our forest trees and plants in an effort to maintain a healthy population of all species.

Cultivated plants, on the other hand are pruned, by our hand, for several reasons.

- To keep a plant healthy
(Prune to let in light and air, remove dead and dying branches, crossing limbs etc.)
- To keep a plant from growing too large
(Pruning roots as well as branches may be called for to keep a plant in size!)
- To make a plant more beautiful
by pruning stems, shoots, leaf buds or flower buds)

My vast experience has shown that pruning will not harm a plant but will actually help it in all the areas indicated above.

Harry Wright

(The Rhodoteller Nov 2006 Vol 21 #3)

Member's Corner

R. Lees Scarlet.



The Rhodoteller

Rootstalk by Indumentum

It's that time of year when Indumentum comes up with recommendations for stocking stuffers. Though I usually like to think I am contrary to consumer trends, it is probably time you bought a digital camera for that gardener in your life. Many gardeners like photography. It is enjoyable to record the progress of your garden and to take happy snaps during garden visits. Last Christmas my stocking was stuffed with a digital camera and ever since I have discovered the previously unknown delights of digital photography.

There are the obvious advantages of a 'film-less' camera which allows you to take as many pictures as you like as long as you have enough storage space in your camera and can periodically clear out the memory by down-loading the pictures to your computer. With a relatively inexpensive colour printer you can print out your own pictures or have them printed by taking a CD of the photos (or e-mailing them) to a commercial developer. The photo dimensions are different to a conventional camera and are basically 4 units long and 3 units high. If you want satisfactory print quality up to a print size of 4 inches by 3 inches, you only need a 'one Mega pixel camera'. If you want good print quality up to a print size of 8 inches by 6 inches you would need a 'five Mega pixel camera'. Of course you don't have to print the pictures at all. You can view them on a computer or on your TV, using a DVD player that can read a photo CD. Storage of photos is much easier as they can all be stored as electronic files which mean less clutter in the cupboard (but potentially more clutter on your hard drive).

A digital camera is much lighter than a conventional camera so it is easy to carry and you are more likely to have it with you at that key photographic moment. But the most surprising thing that we discovered is that, for the same depth of field (range of sharpness) as a conventional camera, the aperture setting is four times larger. This is very significant for someone like me who has been lugging a tripod around for years, even up mountains for alpine

flower photography. For taking images of flowers

you need a good depth of field to get most of the flower in focus, especially for close-ups. I use a tripod so that I can get a better depth of field by reducing the aperture size which requires a correspondingly slower shutter speed. At slow shutter speeds, the tripod is required to eliminate camera shake. With the digital camera, I can now get a satisfactory depth of field with an f-stop of F8 whereas a conventional camera would require an aperture setting of F32 for the same depth of field. However, the F8 setting requires a shutter speed of 1/125, easily fast enough for hand-held work. Under the same lighting conditions, a conventional camera with an f-stop of F32 would require a shutter speed of 1/30 which is definitely tripod territory. Curiously, this tremendous advantage of digital cameras is not prominent in any promotional literature that I have seen. The advantage factor varies depending on the make of digital camera purchased. Ask your dealer about it and see if he knows what you're talking about!

The reasons for the improved depth of field with digital cameras are quite complex and involve something called 'circles of confusion'. I am not making this up. But to explain it would get too confusing and circular and we are getting to the end of the page. If you need to know more, you can always look it up on the Internet using Google.

(Yak 2003)

*Wishing you all a healthy
and
Happy New Year*