

THE RHODOVINE



THE MOUNT ARROWSMITH RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

MARS
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12th March Meeting Speakers

Bill Stipe knows rhododendrons and that is the subject of this month's talk, sort of rhodos 101. The former manager of Meerkerk Rhododendron Gardens on Whidbey Island, he is the owner now of Glynneden Gardens, a nursery that specializes in rhodos. He has developed a display garden that showcases local hybridizers' rhodos and rare species and is evaluating several biological control methods for garden pests.

An ARS bronze medal holder, Mr. Stipe is an active member of the Seattle and Whidbey Island chapters and also involved with the Northwest Hybridizers Association, with many of his hybrids registered and others still being evaluated.

Bill has made several trips to China and is growing many of the seeds collected there. He is the president of the Whidbey Island Chapter, ARS District 2 director, chairman of the ARS Speaker's Bureau and a member of the ARS Rhododendron of the Year committee.



Nature's Art (Susan Lightburn)

MARS Meetings

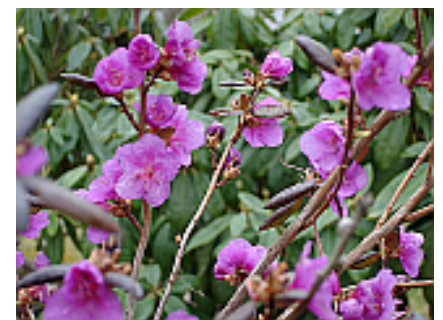
Second Wednesday of the Month 7:30 pm
Qualicum Beach Civic Centre

April Meeting Wednesday 9th

Wanda McAvoy, our far-flung West Coast member will talk about the George Fraser rhododendrons in Ucluelet . . .

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R.dauricum-February **2008**

(Ann Robertson)
4', -ve 25'F, VE, 4/3/4
Compact, upright and semi deciduous. Brilliant rosy funnel shaped flowers.
(Greer's Guidebook. Page 33)

President's Message

Writing this letter on 29 Feb I reflect on the many aspects of 'that extra calendar day', an extra day of grace perhaps, an extra day's pay, except for those on salary, in which case it is day of no pay. This day occurs in the intercalary (leap) year following three common years. The system was developed in 46BC by that much maligned Emperor, Julius Caesar, to keep the calendar year synchronized with the astronomical or seasonal year. So if Caesar had not come along we could have very different definitions for early, mid and late blooming rhododendrons! Thanks to him we know that right now it is early blooming time and I can report to you that my first rhododendron bloomed on leap year's day, a fine blood red strigillosum.

Birthday greetings to any MARS members who, like the famous Canadiens hockey player Pocket Rocket Richard, who is 18 today, have a birthday on 29 Feb.

Let the blooming season continue...

A last reflection, have you walked down by the ocean recently? There you will find great movement, tens of sea lions and seals, many, many seabirds with an armada of seagulls (don't wear your best outfit) wheeling around the beach accompanied by eagles and osprey. They, along with the boatloads of fishermen, are awaiting the arrival of the Herring. What a sight!

It's all about anticipation...and Spring. Enjoy March.

John England

Milner Gardens 7th Annual Spring Plant Sale

Apr 19 & 20, 10 am to 4 pm.

Admission by donation.

Add a piece of this Heritage Garden to your own garden.

Milner Gardens & Woodland
2179 West Island Highway
Qualicum Beach, BC V9K 1G1
Tel: (250)752-8573

Member's Corner

Good Reading

Art Lightburn has looked up and suggested these internet pages for us in the ARS site.

Tips for beginners

<http://www.rhododendron.org/v46n1p21.htm>

How to select a Rhodo from your local nursery

<http://www.rhododendron.org/v45n3p136.htm>

How to Grow Rhododendrons from seed

<http://www.rhododendron.org/v48n1p10.htm>



R. moupinense –February 2008

(Art and Susan Lightburn)

2', 0°F, VE, 4/3/4.

Open spreading habit, snow white flowers with deep red purple blotches.

(Greer's Guidebook, page51)

Membership

Welcome to Beatrice Blakemore who joined us on 19th February.

Editor's Corner

Apologies to Jean Greig for the typo error of her name in the last issue.

Send **your magazine contributions** to Ann Robertson.

752-5997 annierobertson@shaw.ca

Revvng up for Spring

The busiest time for MARS members is coming up:

Rhodo Show and Sale 19th April.

Oceanside Sale 26th and 27th April.

Garden Tour (Mother's Day)

10th and 11th May.

These are our major fundraisers that keep us going through the rest of the year.

Both committees of the **Rhodo Show** and the **Garden Tour** are hard at work and will need the help of the general membership as the dates draw near. Bert Harding, chairman of the Rhodo Show and Sale (Curling Rink, Parksville) reminds members that we ran out of bottles last year, because there were so many trusses on display. He hopes there will be just as many trusses or more this year, but we need more Perrier-type bottles, small and liter size. So scour your garage and your neighbors', we can use them.

We need a volunteer to host the Party after the Rhodo Show

Barbara Kulla, chairman of the **MARS Oceanside plant sale** (Bradley Centre, Coombs) is urging members to look around their gardens and see what they can part with. It's a good time to divide perennials. And don't be shy about begging from friends and the guy next door. It's amazing what people throw out.

At last year's two-day sale, MARS sold almost all the plants brought in, including hostas, day lilies, violas, trilliums (from seed) Japanese maple seedlings, sedums, bergenias, hellebores; the list goes on. There was even a donation from a woman who was moving. "Come and get them," she said, and we did. This year, the goal is for even more donations.

Barbara suggests looking for the showiest plants and potting up the biggest ones possible. However, small plants in clean 10-20 cm pots are also much in demand.

If anyone needs pots, or has extra pots, or needs more information, let Barbara or Marilyn Dawson know.

Seedy Success

More than 1600 people wandered past the MARS table on Feb. 2 at the Civic Centre and it seemed like most of them stopped to talk and enter the draw for R. Ingrid Mehlquist. Thanks to Ron and Judy McMaster, John and Arlene England, Susan Lightburn and Ann Robertson who answered lots of questions, handed out information and chatted up the passersby. Marilyn Dawson and Barbara Kulla organized the table.

Winner of the rhodo

was Marnee Tutton of Whiskey Creek.

Look at all these seeds!!!



"Who said cattails aren't beautiful"
(Susan Lightburn)

More dates to remember

PARS visit exchange
Peace Arch Rhododendron Society
Qualicum 22nd -23rd April
White Rock 21st - 22nd May

Fairwinds 2nd annual Landscape & Water Conservation Fair

Saturday, April 19, 2008 at Fairwinds Centre,
3455 Fairwinds Drive, Nanoose Bay
10:00 am to 4:00 pm

General Meeting Minute

Tuesday Feb. 19, 2008

MEETING AT: 7:30 pm. Minutes of the January meeting appeared in the Rhodovine. They were accepted as presented.

GUESTS: Nicola Lupton, Brian Long.

CORRESPONDENCE: B.C. Council of Gardens (Jan-Feb. issue), Victoria Chapter newsletter and a letter from Laura Grant, the ARS director reminding us of the spring convention in April in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

REFRESHMENTS: Judy McMaster, Arlene England and Barbara Kulla provided the cookies and cake.

TREASURER'S REPORT: The January statement, reported total income as \$305 and expenses at \$472.67 with an overall bank balance of \$5461.92. Tony Ansdell reported he had sent 2007 records to Jim Greig for the annual audit.

PROGRAM: Art Lightburn outlined the program through May. March speaker will be Bill Stipe of Whidbey Island; Wanda McAvoy will talk about the George Fraser rhodos at Ucluelet in April and David Rowe will follow in May with his talk on bonsai.

GARDEN TOUR: Art Lightburn told the meeting that Barbara Kulla and Linda Derkach were still looking for one more great garden and members were invited to speak up. He will bring the volunteer sign up board to the next meeting.

TRUSS SHOW: Bert Harding reminded members that the Rhodo Show and Plant Sale at the Parksville Curling Club is on April 19 and he will need volunteers for a variety of jobs including cash register. There will be a training session beforehand.

MEMBERSHIP: Bert Harding welcomed one new member, Bernice Blackmore. He said he has several name tags that have not been picked up. He also urged members to check the new address roster and let him know of any mistakes.

WAYS AND MEANS: The door prize was Rimshot; other raffle prizes were Naselle, Hachmann's Marlis, Golfer and Norm Todd's fertilizer.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Art Lightburn said that the Species Workshop is almost fully subscribed. He will need about 10 billets for Sat. April 5.

2. Mary Parker outlined plans for the exchange visit with **the Peace Arch Rhododendron Society**. PARS members visit Qualicum on April 22 and 23, and tour the gardens of Tom Hill and Al and Maria Bieberstein. The following day they will go to Tofino to see Ken Gibson's spread, stay overnight in Tofino and leave the

next day. The MARS visit to White Rock and Surrey is May 21 and 22. Mary wants to know who is going. She also mentioned that Stubbs Island is open to the public May 17-18 and Fraser Days is May 24.

3. It's time to choose the Rhododendron of the Year (ROY) for the ARS. Ann Gutsche will canvass for the 2011 selections.

4. Geoff Ball of Milner Gardens has agreed to attend the March meeting and offer reduced price memberships to MARS members. It was noted that Milner opens this year officially on March 20, but the garden is open on March 1 for one day on a donation-basis.

5. Velda Rhodes offered to be official greeter at MARS general meetings. .

SPEAKERS for the evening were Gerry Babiy, Kathy Claxton and Terry Richmond in the popular panel discussion format. Gerry, the proprietor of Arrowsmith Nursery said she prefers to buy island-grown when possible but all her plants are from B.C. She thinks ahead, starts ordering in August for the following spring. Kathy confined her comments to container-growing and there were lots of questions from the audience. She recommended several internet sites that gave useful information such as;

gardenwise.com

weekendgardener.net

my-container/garden.com.

Terry talked about various kinds of fertilizer, more of which is printed elsewhere in this issue. He also has compiled information in a binder for the MARS library.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT: 10 PM



**Speakers Terry, Kathy and Gerry
(Susan Lightburn)**

RHODODENDRON FERTILIZERS by Terry Richmond

Chemical (inorganic fertilizers)

The fertilizer I prefer in this category is green valley 10-8-6 with fritted trace elements. To a 10kg bag of 10-8-6 .I add 2kg prilled dolomite lime and 1kg Epson salts.

Organic/Natural fertilizers

Organic materials that can be used to create an organic fertilizer contain between one and all three of the macro-nutrients (N-P-K) and many trace elements. The seed meals, soybean, cottonseed, canola, flaxseed, sunflower, neem, etc. generally have an N-P-K value of about 5-2-1 plus trace elements. Kelp meal is reported to contain every element presently known.

*It should be noted that most chemical fertilizers and even some organic materials high in nitrogen, such as fresh manure, blood meal and vampire bat guano, will burn the roots of dwarf and small rhododendrons. The same is true for caustic fresh wood ash.

Below is a list of some of the organic/natural materials and their most important (N-P-K) nutrient.

		<u>SECONDARY ELEMENTS</u>	
<u>NITROGEN- (N)</u>		<u>CALCIUM-(CA)</u>	
Canola Meal	(5.5-2-1)	Dolomite lime	20-30%
Cotton Seed	(6-2-1)	Agricultural lime	32%
Neem meal	(5-1-2)	Gypsum	22%
Alfalfa powder	(2-.5-2)	Wood ash	9%
Fish meal	(3-2-1)	Bone meal	22%
Blood meal	(12-0-0)	Fish meal	6%
Bat guano	(10-3-1)		
<u>PHOSPHORUS-P)</u>		<u>MAGNESIUM-(MG)</u>	
Bone meal	(2-12-0)	Dolomite lime	10%
Shrimp meal	(0-3-0)	Epson salts	10%
Rock phosphate	(0-3-0)	Langbeinite	11%
<u>POTASSIUM-(K)</u>		<u>SULPHUR-(S)</u>	
Kelp meal	(1-.5-3)	Langbeinite	23%
Green Sand	(0-0-3)	Elemental sulphur	70-100%
Langbeinite	(0-0-18)		

My favorite organic materials are alfalfa, bone meal, kelp, rabbit manure and earth worm castings. Earth worm casting are 7 or neutral Ph and contain .86% nitrogen, .37% phosphoric acid, .25% potash, 2.3% calcium, .72% iron plus a multitude of trace elements.

SOME ORGANIC/NATURAL FERTILIZERS

Parts by volume

1. 3 parts alfalfa
1 part bone meal
1 part kelp meal
1 part prilled dolomite
 2. 1 part alfalfa
1 part fish meal
½ part bone meal
1 part green sand
1 part gypsum
 3. 4 parts soybean meal
1 part bone meal
½ part kelp meal
½ part agricultural lime
½ part prilled dolomite
 4. 4 parts canola meal
1 part rock phosphate
or
½ part bone meal
½ part kelp or green sand
1 part prilled dolomite
 5. 1 part feather meal
2 parts fish meal
1 part alfalfa
1 part canola meal
2 parts bone meal
2 parts kelp meal
1 part langbeinite
 6. 2 parts alfalfa
2 parts canola meal
1 part rock phosphate
½ part bone meal
½ part kelp meal
½ part green sand
1 part prilled dolomite
 7. **RICHMOND - 1993**
2 parts fish meal
2 parts canola meal
2 parts alfalfa
½ part rock phosphate
½ part bone meal
½ part kelp meal
½ part green sand
1 part prilled dolomite
1 part worm castings
5 parts sand
5 parts composted fish waste
or animal manure
 8. **UCLUELET MIX - 2004**
Chemical and Organic

4 parts 10-8-6 green valley
4 parts Sheena's best organic rhodo
+ azalea food 2-.7-2.5
(containing alfalfa, epsom
salts, rock phosphate, kelp, green sand,
langbeinite).
1½ parts dolomite
½ part epsom salts
10 parts animal manure
plus worm castings.
- The above mix contains approximately three times the magnesium of a normal mix as an experiment to combat rhododendron powdery mildew. Six years to go in a 10 year study. Very encouraging to date.