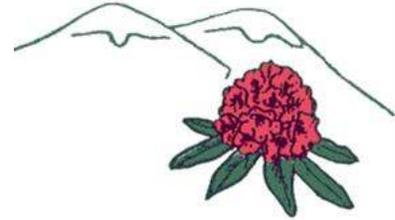


THE RHODOVINE



THE MOUNT ARROWSMITH
RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

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Meeting Coor

Membership - Linda Derkach

Milner Gardens - John England

Plant Sale - Barbara Kulla

Program Chair - Ann DeBrincat

PR - Marilyn Dawson

Refreshments - Anne Gutsche

Sunshine - Judy McMaster

Tickets - Sandra Hemsworth

Truss Show - Maria & Al

Bieberstein

Ways & Means - Don Bridgen

This Month

Wednesday, April 13

Bill Bischoff, President of the Fraser South Rhododendron Society, will speak at our April meeting on his prize-winning garden. Bill is no stranger to MARS having entertained us in the past with features on cyclamen and other topics.



Photo by Ken Gibson

Rhododendron moupinense
(Grieg's form) blooming now in
Ken Gibson's Tofino Garden.

MARS Meetings

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

Next Meeting

13th April 2011



Rhododendron 'George's Delight'
resides in the garden of Lorne
and Cindy Hepting. Many
exquisite trusses like this will
be on display at our annual
Rhododendron Show and Sale to
be held on **Saturday, April 16**
from 10 to 2:00 pm at the
Parksville Curling Club.

At our April meeting, **Al and
Maria Bieberstein will be
signing up volunteers** to help on
this day. Please volunteer!

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From Your President...

It's April and the start of the MARS special events season. These events make us a vibrant part of the community and generate the money to allow us to run the club, subsidize the membership fees and give us the freedom to consider other activities.

First is the **Rhododendron Show and Sale on April 16** (formerly the Truss Show and Sale) at the Parksville Curling Club. This is a chance for members and others to show off their blooms and to buy special plants from professional growers. At the April meeting there will be a demonstration of how to prepare your blooms for the show. The Show and Sale usually involves most club members. Al and Maria Bieberstein will have a sign-up board at the April meeting where you can volunteer to be part of this activity.

Next is the **Spring Fling** on Saturday, **April 30** at the Qualicum Beach Community Hall. This is a sale of plants donated by MARS members. There will also be other people selling plants, crafts and gourmet food. Please give your surplus plants to Marilyn Dawson who has more information on this event.

The annual **MARS Garden Tour** is planned for **May 7 and 8**. We have 13 gardens from San Pareil to Nanoose. Volunteers are needed to sit at the gardens to welcome visitors and direct them to features of the garden. Volunteers sit for three hours on Saturday or Sunday, morning or afternoon. We ask that you invite friends and relatives to take a shift as we may not have enough MARS members this year. Volunteers each receive a free ticket for the tour. Linda Derkach will have the volunteer sign-up board at the April meeting.

All of these events are of benefit to your club and give us all a chance to work with each other, to socialize and to contribute to the community. I encourage us all to be a part of this.
Tony

Did you order organic fertilizer from Terry Richmond? Please come prepared to take delivery at our April meeting.

Ask an Expert.....

Lynne Asks: What should I be doing for my rhododendrons now that spring is finally here?

Answer from Joan and Terry:

Due to our very wet and cold March, we should be cautious about walking on cold, wet soil until things start to warm up and dry out. Compacting the soil harms the millions of beneficial insects, worms and micro-organisms working to the benefit of our plants.

By now, you will have cut out any dead wood and either repaired or pruned damaged branches. Clean up any large branches but don't worry about small twigs, etc.

Fertilizing....

If you have not yet fertilized your rhododendrons, you can do so now. If you are also planning to mulch and use Epsom salts, you can mix these all together to save time and labour. Spread to a thickness of ½ inch. Mixing the fertilizer with the mulch prevents some of the leeching that occurs when fertilizer is applied by itself. Other acid-loving plants will like this yummy treatment as well!

Moving a Rhododendron.....

If you need to move a rhododendron, and didn't do it in October (the best time to transplant) you can do it now before mid-April.

Thanks to Joan Rich and Terry Richmond.



Photo by Ken Gibson

Rhododendron 'Cheer' endearing itself in early spring in the Tofino garden of Ken Gibson.

More than Five Favourites..

Luscious pink, peach, orange and apricot rhododendrons abound in the beautiful garden of Lorne and Cindy Hepting. Here is just a taste of the huge collection of rhododendrons that Lorne tends. Many are very old and approaching tree status, while others are happy to remain in large oak barrels.



Rhododendron 'Bow Bells'



Rhododendron 'Medusa' in a half oak barrel.



Rhododendron 'Hansel'



Rhododendron 'Golden Torch'



Rhododendron 'Lem's Cameo'



Rhododendron 'Unique Marmalade'

All photos by Lorne Hepting

MARS Does the Spring Fling

Spring is a busy time for MARS members. The **Rhododendron Show and Sale needs volunteers on April 16** and the **Spring Fling** (once the Oceanside Plant Sale) needs volunteer plants as well as bodies for the **April 30** sale at the Community Hall in Qualicum Beach.

This is the sale when members offer plants from their gardens for sale, perennials and shrubs, even plants grown from seed. Last year one member produced heritage tomatoes that were snapped up quickly. Two years ago trilliums grown from seed were big hits. Big sellers in perennials are unusual lilies, peonies, heucheras, hostas - particularly named ones - and succulents. Sometimes there's a demand for the old fashioned, or a rare colour.

Please look around your garden and see what's ready to be divided, or, if you are tired of a certain shrub or plant, trim it and pot it up for the sale. If it is in good condition someone will want it.

No invasives please. If you have plant material but can't get to it for some reason, contact Marilyn Dawson or Barbara Kulla for help. For the day of the sale, several volunteers will be needed. At 8 am we must set up tables for the vendors and bring in plants for the sale. From 9 am to 2:30 pm, volunteers are needed to sell. Historically most of the action comes in the first few hours. And then at 2:30 more help is needed for a quick cleanup. If you can help, see Marilyn or Barbara.

Other vendors signed up will be selling veggies and annuals, baked goods and crafts.

Contact Barbara Kulla bkulla@shaw.ca or Marilyn Dawson at dawsom@shaw.ca if you need help getting plants to the sale.

Books We Love

As passionate gardeners, we know that the soil we assign as home for our plants is one of the most important ingredients for success. But good soil is not just dirt – it is an amazing place holding many secrets.

Secrets to Great Soil by Elizabeth P. Stell is a most useful and practical guide for providing information about soil, composting and mulching - everything you ever wanted to know in order to create healthy, fertile soil for your precious plants.

Written for passionate, home gardeners, the manual provides information in a very readable style, along with clear and helpful illustrations.

There is a large section on making and using compost. Simple charts provide information on everything from trouble shooting your compost pile to what to use, what not to use and why. Instructions for building different types of compost bins, leaf and worm composting are included. Green manures for soil improvement are de-mystified.

Finally, a large section on fixing problems such as thin soil, managing slopes, improving clay and heavy soils, improving acidic or alkaline soils and controlling diseases is essential reading for home gardeners like us who want robust and healthy landscapes.

This is a book we would not be without, and we use it regularly to maintain our vegetable and ornamental garden.

Secrets to Great Soil is published by Storey Books and is available in both the new and used book section of Chapters.

Milner Gardens Plant Sale
April 16 and 17 from 10 am to 4 pm
Master gardeners answer your plant questions
Refreshments available
Members only early plant sale access is
Friday, April 15 from 5 to 7pm

Rhododendron Show Procedures and Regulations

Here are the rules for the annual MARS Rhodo Show and Plant Sale. On the reverse side are details of how and when to enter your trusses, i.e. rhodo blooms.

1. Eligibility

Exhibits in most categories will be accepted from members of MARS and non-members in the area. **Note the Novice category is open only to new MARS members (three years or less).** All members of a household will be considered to be one exhibitor.

2. Entries

- All entries shall have been grown by the exhibitor for at least 6 months and primarily cared for by the competitor.
- Only one entry of each name in each category per exhibitor. In other words, *R. macabeanum*, for example, could be entered in the species category and the appropriate color category. Extra blooms are encouraged but will be for display only.
- All entries should be taken from plants grown without artificial protection, except for the category, *Protected*, which is for the non-hardy.

3. Definitions

Species: Botanically identified plants originating from seeds or cuttings.

Hybrid: Plants resulting from crossbreeding of more than one species, hybrid or combination thereof.

Truss: A single rachis, i.e. all florets coming from one bud.

Spray: Multi-stems emerging from a single stem.

Hammerhead: Truss with multiple rachis emanating from a single terminal.

Unknowns: A bloom whose identity is unknown to the owner and therefore cannot be judged. Unknowns provide extra color for the Exhibition Table.

4. Exhibitors

- Shall make an effort to identify the exhibits.
- Entries will be accepted from **7 am to 8.45 am** at the Parksville Curling Club.

- Entries and ribbons may be removed at 2 pm, but not before.

5. Preparation of Trusses

- Blooms should be selected when they are at the peak of their development.
- Blooms should be cut from well-watered plants during the coolest part of the day.
- Blooms should be carefully groomed. Damaged or dead twigs, leaves, bud scales and flower pips should be removed.
- Cleaning or washing of leaves is advised, but no artificial polishing is allowed.
- Use suitable containers to retain water during transportation to the show. Chemical additives to preserve bloom freshness can be used.

Participants' guide: Everyone who has blooming plants in their garden is encouraged to bring trusses either for judging or display. All categories, except the Novice category is open to members and non-members alike. **The Novice category is open to MARS members only.**

Members should familiarize themselves with the categories and, a few days before the show look around their garden and see what can be entered.

Categories are: Red, Pink, White, Blue Collection, Colour Collection (any colour that doesn't fit elsewhere) Foliage, Lax Truss, Spray, Species large leaf, Species small leaf, Hammerhead, Novice, Protected, (such as *madonii* and *vireyas* that need winter protection here.)

The Four-Step Process to Enter Blooms in MARS Rhodo Show

1. Register

Proceed to the **Registration Table**, sign in and pick up a competitor number and a number of dots. You will need a dot for each entry.

Proceed to the **Labelling Table** and leave your list of Truss names. Lists will be taken in order. Please don't shout out entry names. There

may be a wait for plant names if a lot of people come at the same time.

2. Put Trusses in Bottles

Nearby is a table with bottles and corks. Take one bottle for each truss, put a numbered dot on the bottom of each bottle, making sure first that it is dry. (Don't turn the bottle over; it's full of water). Place a truss into each bottle using a cork to hold it securely if necessary.

3. Label Trusses

Leave trusses on the **Work Table** and go to the **Labelling Table** to pick up labels. Take trusses and labels to the **Holding Table**. At any stage, feel free to ask for help.

4. Position Trusses in their categories

From the **Holding Table**, trusses will be taken by a designated volunteer to the judging area and placed in the appropriate category. The label is placed in front of each truss. All categories are clearly labeled.

All Trusses must be in place by 8:45 am so judging can start on time. Late entries will go to the Exhibition Table.

Please bring as many extra trusses as you can for the exhibition table.



Rhododendron 'Noble Mountain' is a highly rated, strong bloomer with very attractive, dark green foliage on a dense plant - thriving here in the garden of Lorne and Cindy Hepting.

**The Mid Island Floral Art Club
will meet on
Thursday, April 14 at 2:00 p.m.
at St. Stephen's Church Hall,
150 Village Way, Qualicum Beach**

**Demonstration of "Less is More"
by Lilo Kallai
of Fresh N Fabulous Flowers and Gifts**

**All welcome - Guest fee \$5
Call 250-248-2976 or 250-752-2179
for more information or www.mifac.org**



Rhododendron 'Apricot Fantasy' has a beautiful truss set off by lush, dark green leaves - a stunning combination. This excellent specimen is growing in the garden of Lorne and Cindy Hepting.



Rhododendron 'Pink Jeans' here with *R. 'The Honourable Jean Marie de Montague'* - a bold combination of one of the best reds with one of its sports - here in Lorne's garden.

Mt. Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society

General Meeting held at the Civic Centre in Qualicum Beach, March 9 at 7:30 pm.

MINUTES of the previous meeting were approved as published in the Rhodovine.

Refreshments: Provided by Velda Rhodes and Maria Bieberstein

Guests: Marianne Hodges, Birgitta Mick, Cathy Midnnis, Shirley Forsberg, Jan Kellett, Jill Green and Louise Wall

BUSINESS ARISING: 1. MARS will host the North Island Chapter when members tour gardens in Port Alberni and the Qualicum area. Terry Richmond says he has organized the Port segment. Gardens in the Nanoose area have been selected with the tour winding up at Al and Maria Biebersteins' for a garden tour and appies late in the day.

2. Tony said there will be a draw at the April meeting to help someone attend the ARS convention in Vancouver, Wash. in May. Any member who has never been to an ARS convention before is eligible and is encouraged to enter the contest. The winner gets \$400 after returning from the convention with their receipts.

3. Donna DeBoer has completed an inventory of the library and members were urged to return long overdue books.

CORRESPONDENCE: The Cowichan Rhododendron Society advises there are still spaces available for its tour of mainland gardens in May. The B.C. Council of Gardens sent the March/April report. It's also available on line.

MEMBERSHIP: Bert Harding said we have 60 memberships at the present time for a total of 98 members. There are 2 associate members.

TREASURER: Bert Harding reported the club is in a good financial position.

PROGRAM: Ann DeBrincat said she hopes to have Dick Beamish of the Nanaimo chapter speak to the club in April. There will also be a

short information session on preparing entries for the Rhododendron Show and Sale on April 16. The May program is still to be decided.

TRUSS SHOW: For the benefit of new members, Maria Bieberstein explained what goes on at the rhododendron show and sale and the need for volunteers. Sign-up sheets were set up for volunteers to fill in at the break.

GARDEN TOUR: Linda Derkach also had a sign-up board available for the Garden Tour on May 7 & 8. Volunteer sitters get a free ticket and members can ask non-member friends to sit as well. She said there was still a need for "guys to help" with the heavier signs.

SPRING FLING: For its first perennial sale at the Q.B. Community Hall, MARS is offering tables at \$15 each to interested vendors. Marilyn Dawson said several had already indicated an interest. She urged members to look around their gardens and pot up perennials.

RHODOVINE: Linda said she would welcome more input from members, particularly photos.

WAYS AND MEANS: Don Bridgen said the door prize was *R. 'Catawbiense Grandiflorum'*. Other prizes were *R. campylogynum*, *R. 'Crete'* and the frog labels.

NEW BUSINESS: Kim Hammond from Milner Gardens and Woodland was on hand to re-new memberships at a reduced rate.

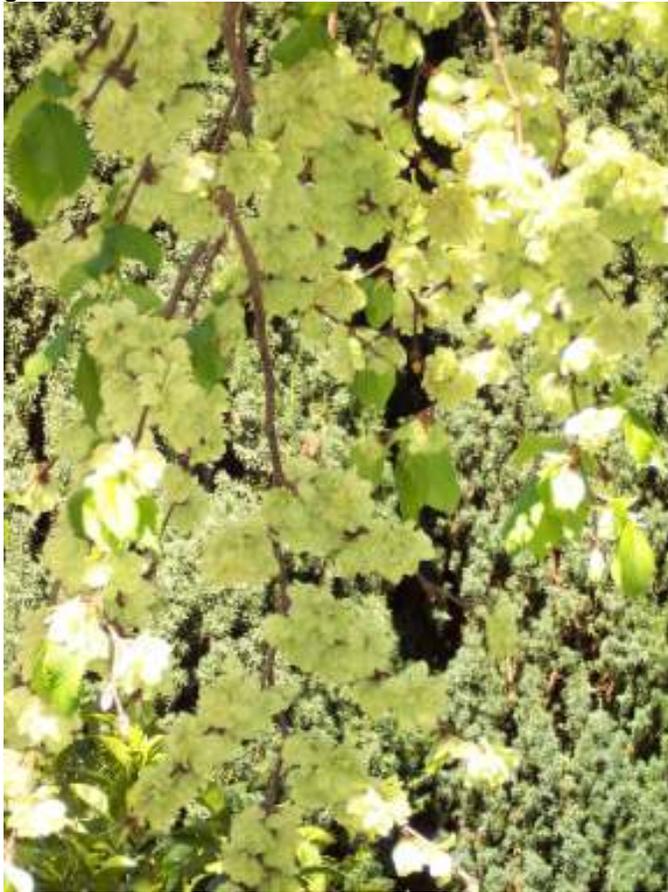
GUEST SPEAKER: Becci and Keith Russell, who own Stone Tree Cottage and Gardens in Courtenay gave a presentation on their first visit to British gardens. The couple visited Wales, the Cotswolds and Somerset and were impressed with the history of the gardens and the area itself. The power point presentation included photos of towering magnolias planted in 1795 and a huge laburnum arch that was spectacular in bloom.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 9:25 pm

Garden Journal

From your Newsletter Editor....

That time of year is almost here – the time when passionate gardeners take off for the famous garden meccas of the world to drool over amazing gardens and exotic cultivars. It is my favourite thing to do – wander around gardens, get ideas and long for plants that, sadly, I can never have. 'Too big' or 'too tender' are the main reasons for not trying many lovely plants in my own garden. We are destined to enjoy some exquisite specimens from afar – and at the same time be grateful for the wonderful climate we have here on Vancouver Island's east coast. So here are a few of the plants that I must be satisfied to enjoy in other people's gardens.



At Filoli in mid-April, with sunlight dancing through its elegant branches, *Ulmus glabra* 'Camperdownii' (Camperdown elm) attracted much attention with its weeping, twisted branches and double-toothed matte green leaves setting off the winged green fruit. It was a spectacular sight standing solitary in the landscape, and at only 25 feet in height and width, one of the smaller elms.



I once saw *Echium candicans* (Pride of Madeira) growing in Qualicum, but this statuesque biennial grows best where frost is not a problem. Here it is thriving in the Portola Valley just south of San Francisco in mid-April during the 2007 ARS Convention.



A vision I shall never forget is *Rhododendron* 'Loderi King George', just one of many stunning specimens reflected in the elegant pool in a California nursery's demonstration garden – always a dangerous place to go while travelling. It just leaves one longing for things a little out of reach!

A highly rated rhododendron, huge flowers open pale pink and then become white. It is a fragrant rhododendron that could one day reach the size of a tree.

For my small garden, best just to enjoy the photo and memories of an outstanding garden tour.