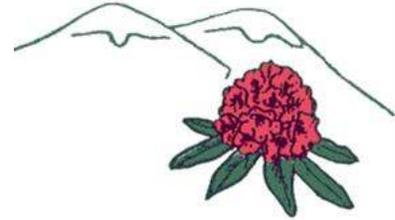


THE RHODOVINE



**THE MOUNT ARROWSMITH
RHODODENDRON SOCIETY**

MARS
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Christmas Party

Dollar Table - Cassy LaCouvee

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Garden Tour - Linda Derkach

Greeter - Velda Rhodes

Historian - Cassy Lacouvee

Library - Donna deBoer

Meeting Coordinator -

Membership - Bert Harding

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:

POT LUCK

WIND-UP PARTY

Saturday, June 11

4:30 pm

At the home of

Linda and Al Derkach

1051 Surfside Drive

Qualicum Beach

**Please remember to bring
cutlery, plates, cups, a
beverage and a potluck dish of
your choice.**

**We look forward to seeing
everyone on the 11th.**



**MARS members and garden owners
enjoy the potluck party out of the rain
and hail that marked one day of our
annual garden tour.**

MARS Meetings

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

Next Meeting

14th September 2011



**A grand old Rhododendron
on our tour for members
of the North Island RS.**

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From Your President...

Well, here we are at the end of another busy and successful year for MARS.

We had good meetings with excellent speakers and a great in-house panel. We accomplished three challenging events and we hosted a visit from the North Island Rhododendron Society.

Our thanks must go to the organizers of the events and to all the volunteers who made their success possible. A special thanks to all the Garden Sitters who braved the most awful cold and wet weather to do their jobs during our annual Mothers' Day Garden Tour.

Two of our events went well but did not return the financial benefits we achieved last year. These events are very much weather dependent. Last year we had a perfect combination of plant condition and good weather. This year the long, cold spring weather combined with hail, cold and rain during the events kept people home and resulted in lowered financial results, despite the wonderful efforts of all who took part.

The "Spring Fling" went extremely well due to the enthusiasm of the organizers and the people who brought plants for sale. At one point the organizers - Marilyn, Maria, Barbara and others - could not keep up with the incoming volume.

So, as I said, an excellent year for MARS.

It only remains for me to wish you all a good summer season and to look forward to seeing you all in September.
Tony

Missing Plates and Cutlery????

Two white plates and cutlery were left at the Garden Tour Potluck. Please call Marilyn Dawson to bring your things home.

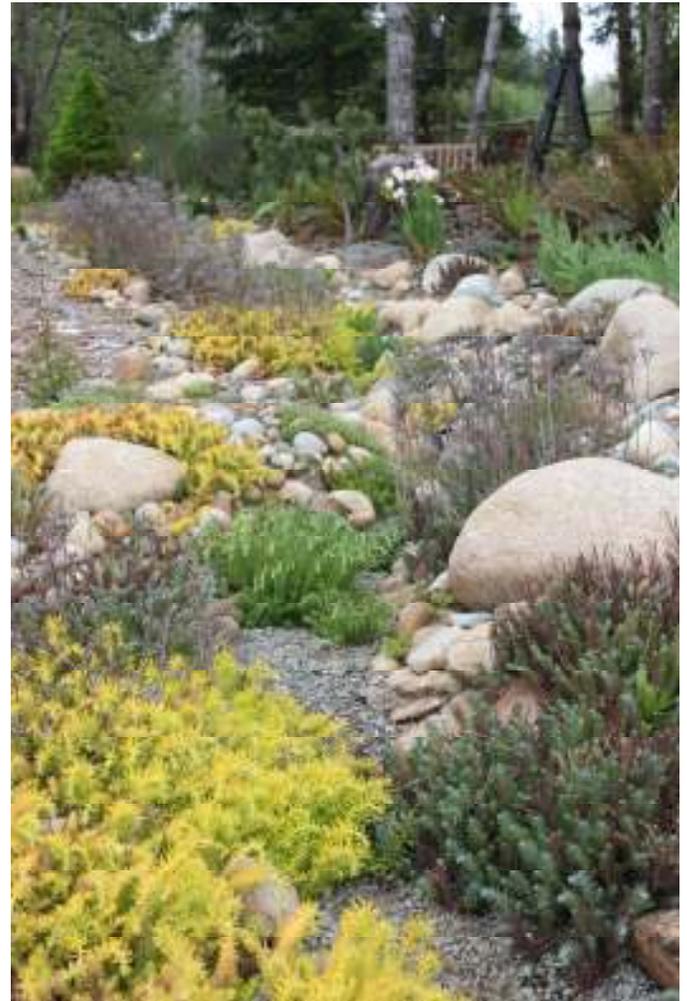
Ask an Expert.....

Tom Asks: With the weather being so cold and rainy – and life being very busy – I didn't have a chance to fertilize my rhododendrons early in the spring. Can I do it now?

Answer from Terry Richmond:

Using a slow-release organic fertilizer, you can still fertilize your rhododendrons just before or just after they bloom – or both.....but not later than June.

Fertilizing in the summer will stimulate fresh new growth that may not have time to harden off before the first frosts come in the fall.



Succulents thrive in the excellent drainage provided by this dry stream in the garden of Don Bridgen on our tour for members of the North Island Chapter.

MARS Garden Tour A Success Despite the Weather



Rhododendron campylogynum is a reliable bloomer.



Kerria japonica



A prolific bloomer on the tour.



The attractive but lethal cones of the Hard Hat pine are nestled around the trunk amid native plants - here in the Dunn garden on our tour.



The Eswyn Lyster Alpine Garden at Nanoose Place contains many rare and unusual alpine plants.



Parrot tulips in the garden of Mike and Joan Rich.

Photos by Barbara Kulla

WORD OF THE MONTH:

LEPIDOTE

By Bruce Palmer

Thanks to Doug Kitts for suggesting this article from the newsletter of the Eugene, Oregon Chapter of the ARS. (Editor's Note: This article refers to some photos and to a lecture held recently at another Chapter. However, the information contained is most informative.)

Our speaker for this month, Bill Hicks, will talk about lepidote rhododendrons, so we should probably review what they are before the meeting.

So the word, related to leaves, is lepidote. Most of the flowers are in full bloom now, so the leaves are of secondary interest. Rhododendron leaves, though, do have interesting features that we enjoy at other times of the year. Among the more interesting leaf structures are those that give the surfaces of the leaves distinctive appearances.

Preparing for the program, we need to concentrate on one type of structure: scales. Rhododendrons with leaf scales on their undersides are called lepidote. It's from the Greek word 'lepidos' meaning scale. Originally the term applied to the scales of snakes and fish. The prefix is used in a number of places in biology. Lepidoptera (scale wing), for example, is the order of insects to which butterflies and moths with their scaly wings belong. *Lepidodendron* (scale tree) is used by paleontologists to describe a long extinct group of large primitive trees whose poorly developed conifer-like leaves left scars on the fossil surfaces that resemble snake skin. The fossil scale marks were so distinctive that early collectors mistook *Lepidodendron* fossils for fossilized snakes. *Lepidodendrons* made up a large percentage of the plants that became the coal deposits in Pennsylvania and elsewhere.

Scales are one of many types of structures on the surfaces of leaves. They fall in a category collectively called trichomes (Greek: 'trichos' meaning a hair). Trichomes come in various shapes and have a number of distinct functions. Many aromatic leaves such as rosemary, sage and geranium carry their scent inside swollen hairs that burst open to release the smell. Nettles have hairs containing an irritant. The trichomes that we rhododendron enthusiasts are most familiar with

are those hairy leaf coverings we term indumentum (Latin: hair covering).

Scales on lepidote rhododendrons are trichomes. They are less conspicuous than indumentum and don't contribute a great deal to the appearance of the leaves. Scales are very small and can't always be seen without a magnifying glass. The illustration of *Rhododendron* 'Alice Eastwood' shows them magnified on the underside of a leaf. Their function is not known for sure (they may repel insects), but they are important in classifying rhododendrons.

Classification of the genus is the next best thing to a nightmare for taxonomists but the presence of scales (lepidote) or lack of them (elepidote, as shown in the photo of *R. 'Ivory Ruffles'*) stands out as a distinct characteristic.

Lepidote and elepidote rhododendrons, each category comprising roughly half of all rhododendron species, are dramatically different. Their genes are sufficiently different that it is extremely difficult to hybridize between the groups. The seeds are different. The flowers open differently. Nearly all of the beautifully fragrant rhododendrons we grow in our benign coastal climate in northwestern California are lepidotes.

In summary, lepidote rhododendrons are a distinct grouping from elepidotes and our gardens would be seriously impoverished without them.



***Rhododendron* 'Shamrock' is an example of a lepidote rhododendron.**

Mt. Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society

General Meeting held at the Civic Centre in Qualicum Beach, May 11, 2011

Minutes of the April General Meeting were approved as they appeared in the Rhodovine.

GUESTS: John Deniseger and June Bouchard
REFRESHMENTS: Anne Gutsche, Kay Burgoyne

BUSINESS ARISING: Tony Ansdell announced that although this was supposed to be the annual meeting of the club and election of next fall's executive, without a quorum, the election would have to be set over until September. A great many members were attending the ARS Convention in Vancouver, Washington.

CORRESPONDENCE: None

:

TRUSS SHOW: Maria Bieberstein reported that the April 16 Rhododendron Show and Sale came off quite well despite the lack of blooms. Members made a valiant effort to produce as many trusses as possible and win ribbons on this very cold day. She thanked all the volunteers for their efforts, particularly those who braved the cold arena for hours and the very stalwart who turned up at the Bieberstein's for the pot luck in the evening.

SPRING FLING: Marilyn Dawson thanked co-organizer Barbara Kulla and the volunteers who brought hundreds of plants and helped with all the chores at the sale at the QB Community Hall. In a few short hours, more than \$1,100 was raised from the plants that filled three tables and spilled out onto the floor.

GARDEN TOUR: With Chair Linda Derkach and Barbara Kulla away at the convention, Marilyn Dawson reported that the tour went off without any major problems, although the weather could have been better. A full report will come later when the committee meets.

WAYS AND MEANS: Don Bridgen described the draw prizes: Door prize was *Rhododendron* 'Dreamland'; other prizes were *R.* 'Very Berry', *R.* 'Saffrano', a wall plaque and a plant bag. Successful prize winners were Guy Loyer, Lorne Hepting, Judy Millicheap, Mazie Walsh and Gillian Walker.

Guest John Deniseger, the current president of the Nanaimo Rhododendron Society spoke briefly to MARS members, reminding them of the upcoming ARS Convention in Nanaimo in September 2012. It will be at the Coast Bastion Hotel, September 21-23 and the theme is "Rhododendrons in Paradise". MARS has already offered support in organizing the plant sale that usually accompanies these conventions. John and wife June also brought and sold tickets to their Garden Tour, a one-day affair on May 22 and a fundraiser for 2012.

GUEST SPEAKER: Long-time member Ann DeBrincat provided a slide presentation of two well-known gardens in Vancouver, proving you don't have to spend thousands of dollars to see beautiful gardens. They are right next door, so to speak. Ann had attended the seminar put on by Ron Knight last spring at UBC and Van Dusen Gardens and took advantage of the time there to photograph hundreds of trees and shrubs - and blooming rhododendrons of course.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm

pH Soil Tester
will be available through the summer. Members wishing to borrow the tester can contact Marilyn Dawson at 752-3694 or email dawsom@shaw.ca.
The tester may be borrowed for one or two weeks.

Portland's Smith Garden Delights ARS Members

Cecil and Molly Smith began collecting rhododendrons in the 1940's. Their woodland garden is now owned by the Portland Chapter of the ARS and is cared for by members of the Portland, Willamette and Tualatin Valley Chapters. Cecil was an early member of the ARS and a well-known hybridizer. His legacy of many fine species and hybrid rhododendrons, and their companions delights hundreds of visitors each year.



Rhododendron 'Elsie Watson'



Rhododendron 'Goldstrike'



Rhododendron vernicosum



Rhododendron 'Lady Chamberlain'



Rhododendron 'Mango Tango'



Rhododendron 'Bambi' x pseudochrysanthum

Rhododendron 'Mango Tango' delighted many of us on the garden tours during the ARS Convention in Vancouver and Portland. Does anyone know a source for this spectacular rhododendron?

Story and Photos by Linda Derkach