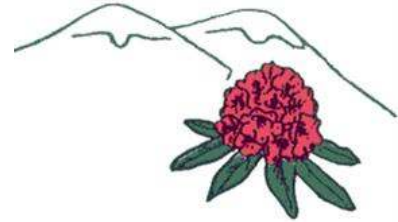


THE RHODOVINE



THE MOUNT ARROWSMITH
RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

MARS
P. O. Box 342
Qualicum Beach. BC
V9K 1S8
mars.rhodos.ca

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2011/2012 Executive

President

Tony Ansdell

752-4475

ansdella@shaw.ca

Treasurer

Bert Harding

752-3923

ruber@shaw.ca

Secretary

Marilyn Dawson

752-3694

dawsom@shaw.ca

Past President

John England

752-6131

jaengland@shaw.ca

Directors

Don Bridgen

723-3916

dabridgen@gmail.com

Velda Rhodes

724-2480

Linda Derkach

752-3545

lindaderkach@shaw.ca

Ann DeBrincat

724-5594

darrylhatch@shaw.ca

Director at large

Maria Bieberstein

468-7252

abieberstein@telus.net

Bursary – Tony Ansdell

Christmas Party

Dollar Table - Cassy LaCouvee

Newsletter Editor - Linda Derkach

Garden Tour – Ken Jones

Greeter - Velda Rhodes

Historian - Cassy Lacouvee

Library – Donna deBoer

Meeting Coordinator- Tony Ansdell

Membership – Bert Harding

Milner Gardens - John England

Plant Sale – Marilyn Dawson

Program Chair - Ann DeBrincat

PR - Marilyn Dawson

Refreshments - Anne Gutsche

Sunshine - Judy McMaster

Door Prize - Sandra Hemsworth

Truss Show – Glen Jamieson

Ways & Means - Don Bridgen

This Month:

Christmas Pot Luck

Rotary House
Qualicum Beach

Please come to our annual
Christmas Pot Luck Party
on **Saturday, December 10**
at **5:00 pm.**

We need appetizers, veggie dishes – and of course your fabulous desserts!

Don't forget to bring a beverage of your choice and a creatively-wrapped present valued up to \$10 for our gift exchange. We also need **donations to the local Food Bank.**

We look forward to seeing you there!



MARS Meetings

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

Next Meeting
11th January 2012



Rhododendron 'White Pippet' captured during Harry Wright's Kalmia Kruiise in June 2011.

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From Your President...

The Species Garden Committee has had a walk around the location within Milner Gardens which is proposed for the Species Garden. The location looks good but there is a lot of tree felling and clearing to be done, and a water supply needed before we can think of planting. The next steps are to prepare a description of the garden and its purpose, and to get estimates of the costs involved in its construction. As I said before, this is a long term project.

We distributed the donation of 29 rhododendrons from Briggs Nurseries to members at the last General Meeting. Now we must look to next year and see if we can match the membership growth of this year.

We have had a fine group of speakers since September and Ann de Brincat is maintaining the level into the New Year.

I hope to see you all at the Christmas Party on December 10 at Rotary Hall. Full details are given in this newsletter. For those who are unable to attend the party, let me wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Tony

Do you have more gardening books than you need??

The MARS Library would be most grateful for any contributions to its collection.

Please bring your surplus books to our monthly meetings or contact Donna DeBoer at 778-424-6699 or at busylady0849@gmail.com.

Membership Dues for 2012

If you have not already renewed, please remember to bring your membership dues to our January meeting to keep your ARS Journal coming.

New Book of Norm Todd's Articles

The Victoria Rhododendron Society is publishing a collection of 23 Norm Todd essays which should be on sale sometime in November.

If you wish a copy please contact Marilyn Dawson at dawsom@shaw.ca, by phone at 250-752-3694 or at the next meeting.

Norm is well known to MARS members who have visited his Saanich nursery. He has also been part of the Truss Show for many years bringing species and hybrids to sell to eager buyers.



Rhododendron 'Courtenay King' was still blooming in June at Harry Wright's garden.

Remembering Harry Wright

On Wednesday, November 9, 2011, several hundred rhododendron enthusiasts and passionate gardeners came together in Courtenay to pay their respects to Harry Wright - a kind and generous friend who had passed away suddenly a few days before. To say that Harry was loved and revered would be an understatement. This is a man whose whole life was marked by loving kindness to his family, friends and fellow gardeners.



Harry generously shared his knowledge and passion for rhododendrons with anyone who showed an interest. He had been a pioneer in the Courtenay area, giving wholeheartedly to the North Island RS, gardens around the community and other island chapters of the ARS. His quiet modesty shone through - and though he was very knowledgeable, he was always supportive and helpful to his fellow rhodoholics.

Marilyn Dawson remembers Harry as a forward thinker, creating new plants, helping MARS to plan a species garden at Milner and taking part in the Nanaimo Conference

planning. He was about to name a new rhododendron to pay homage to Mount Washington. Marilyn remembers Harry's mantra: "Look at the whole plant, not just the bloom. That's only around for short time. The plant has to look good all year."



Jim Grieg remembers meeting Harry for the first time at a national ARS meeting in Victoria. "Early in the evening, I was approached by someone telling me a group was planning to form a new ARS chapter in the Qualicum/Parksville area. Shortly thereafter, I was approached by Harry Wright who said he had been to visit my mother Mary Greig in Royston prior to starting a nursery in Courtenay and that she had been helpful with respect to rhododendrons. Further he invited me for a visit - and to please bring my Mum for a cup of tea. We would talk about the ARS and show me around his nursery. In due course we made such a visit during which he told me that he was well aware that a number of North Island members from Bowser south were in the process of "going their own way" by forming a new chapter, with a consequence of losing some of North Island's very valuable members. He had no choice but to wish them well and, of course, he could not stop them even if he did want to."

In Harry's Garden....

"What I particularly remember about that conversation, though, was how gracious Harry was about having to give up so many valuable members to help the overall objective of the ARS to 'spread the word' about rhodies. He was a remarkably generous man. And he was most helpful to MARS in all the years we have been involved the ARS. Jean and I are sad to lose such a good friend."



Mary Parker has had many special moments that she will always cherish. "I have known this very kind, gentle, Gentleman for 20 years. He always made you feel special, taking the time to show his lovely garden, have tea with Gwen and just talk about life - and rhododendrons of course. You could always have fun with Harry and yet be very serious. He had a way of getting his view across in a very soft spoken, gentle manner. At the district board table, he was very helpful. I always valued his opinion."

Clearly, the rhododendron world - and all of us at MARS - will miss this kind and gentle man. Thank you, Harry, for the rich legacy and significant contributions that you have bestowed. Our sincere condolences go to Gwen and family for their loss.



Unnamed rhododendron in Harry's June garden.



Rhododendron 'Ladybird'



Kalmia 'Shooting Star'

New Bug in Town

MARS member Margot Moser shares her experience and knowledge of Lacebugs

One of the advantages of gardening in this part of BC's west coast is that many pests rampant on the Lower Mainland have not yet gained a toe hold in our area. In 2001, the BC Ministry of Agriculture confirmed the occurrence of four new insect pests of ornamental plants in BC - Viburnum Leaf Beetle, European Chafer, Hemerocallis Gall Midge and Andromeda Lacebug. See: <http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca>

Perhaps it is only a matter of time until these nasties make themselves known in our part of Vancouver Island, but so far, there has been little indication of their presence. Therefore, it was with great dismay recently that I spotted Andromeda Lacebug on a friend's *Pieris japonica* (Lily-of-the-Valley shrub – once known as *Andromeda*). Unfortunately the Andromeda Lacebug is also known to feed on osmanthus as well as some rhododendrons and azaleas.

Once you have dealt with this lacebug, it is easy to recognize the damage it inflicts. First you will notice a yellow-speckled or mottled appearance on the upper surfaces of leaves and on the underside, small black spots along with adult bugs and nymphs. Both adults and nymphs suck plant juices from the leaves, creating the yellow stippling and leaving black fecal material.

This species overwinters as eggs in plant foliage and produces 2 to 3 generations per year. Plant health appears largely unaffected by feeding damage but the cosmetic damage persists throughout the season. *Pieris japonica* growing in sunny locations is much more vulnerable to attack than those in shade. *Pieris floribunda* (Mountain Pieris) and *Pieris formosa* (Himalayan Pieris) are resistant, even in sun.

So, what can we do to prevent or deal with this pest? To be proactive, consider moving *Pieris*

japonica growing in sunny locations to shady spots. Luckily, pieris are among the easier-to-move shrubs, even when quite large. Encouraging beneficial insects in your garden is always a good idea. Ladybugs, lacewings and parasitic wasps love to feed on critters like lacebugs.

If this pest does show up on your plants, hose them off frequently or use an insecticide registered for lacebug control - although few insecticides are left to use in BC - and a last resort. If you spray, do so when nymphs are present on the underside of leaves. Keep in mind that once your plants are infested with lacebugs, it's next to impossible to completely eradicate them. You may want to just sacrifice the pieris to keep them from infecting your rhododendrons.



Yellow speckled foliage



Andromeda Lacebug (*Stephanitis takeyai*)

MARS General Meeting
held at the Civic Centre in Qualicum Beach,
November 9, 2011 at 7:30 pm

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

Refreshments: Provided by Don Bridgen, Anne Gutsche

Guests: Garth and Sue Wedemire

BUSINESS ARISING: 1. Tony Ansdell paid tribute to Harry Wright of the North Island chapter who died of a sudden heart attack. Many MARS members attended the funeral in Courtenay earlier in the day. Harry was well known throughout the Island rhododendron community for his knowledge, his plants and his generosity.

2. The shipment of rhododendrons promised by Briggs Nursery for increasing membership by 10% has arrived and will be drawn for later in the evening.

3. Tony reminded members of the Christmas Party on Sat. Dec. 10 at Rotary Hall on Fern in Qualicum Beach.

CORRESPONDENCE: None. Marilyn Dawson asked members to search their shelves for small black square pots, 6 inches deep and donate them to Nanaimo for the upcoming fall conference. Also, she said she was still taking names for anyone wanting a copy of Norm Todd's selection of essays being published by the Victoria chapter.

MEMBERSHIP: At present there are 68 memberships for a total of 111 members.

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

PROGRAM: Ann DeBrincat reported that Garth Wedemire was the featured speaker. She outlined plans for the new year: John England and Glen Jamieson in January, naturalist Agnes Lyn in February, Jim Barlup in March and Bernie Dinter in April.

TRUSS SHOW: Maria Bieberstein spoke passionately to members about the need for someone to chair the Truss Show. The Biebersteins have handled that job for the past three years and it is time for someone else to take the reins. The rest of the committee is in place. The Truss Show is April 21.

GARDEN TOUR: The new chair of the Mothers' Day Tour, Ken Jones, said the 2012 event will cover gardens from Morningstar to Qualicum Beach; he urged members to recommend great gardens in the area.

WAYS AND MEANS: Don Bridgen said the door prize is *Rhododendron* 'Bruce Brechtbill'. Other draw items were: *R. 'Yaku Princess'* and *R. strigillosum*.

NEW BUSINESS: After the tea break, Tony announced that Glen Jamieson had agreed to chair the Truss Show.

2. Tony also reported that a Species Garden committee had been formed again and would be walking around Milner Gardens and Woodland looking at possible sites.

3. Tony announced he had just learned of the death of Carol Hansen's husband, John. MARS will send condolences.

GUEST SPEAKER: Garth Wedemire presented the second part of his presentation of "To MARS and Back". Two years ago, the White Rock-Surrey group toured gardens in Qualicum area and later MARS visited several mainland gardens. Garth took members on a photographic tour of the Qualicum Beach visit last year, and completed the series this time with a presentation of the beautiful mainland gardens.

At the end of the meeting 29 donated Briggs rhodos were raffled off to members who were present and had paid their 2012 dues.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 9:35 pm

Myth or Magic

Kim Hammond, Grower and Groundskeeper at Milner Gardens and Woodland offers some help with those nasty bugs and pests.

Remember when Nematodes came onto the market? How skeptical we all were about a little blue sponge of impossible-to-see microbes. There were more than a few raised eyebrows and many who didn't read instructions had poor results. Still others pooh-pooed them - at length - and still do. At first they came in a baggie with a blob, and later on in powder form. Do you also remember how pleasantly surprised you were when it worked ...when fewer and fewer notches were found in your new rhododendron leaves and when the crane fly adults weren't swarming around during August barbecues?

We've come a long way since then and most of us who garden are died in the wool, sworn supporters of our parasitic nematodes. Perhaps it was the outbreak of European chafer in Coquitlam a few years back - all but eradicated by nematodes - that turned the tide for them, because now they are a household word.

And now the case for Effective Microorganisms (EM). Around for some time, EM still has some skeptics - including me at first. But I'm cured now. My first exposure to EM was during a course on organic gardening (is there any other kind?). Molasses (a sugar for the fermenting process) is mixed with the "mother" mix of concentrated EM in a somewhat convoluted process. Fermenting is required for several days. Be sure to burp the bottle to prevent pressure build up. Next, the mixture is diluted with water to make the magic elixir for your plants, inside and out.

If I hadn't seen it with my own eyes I may have remained a non-believer. A stephanotis had been languishing in my window for several years. Three smallish leaves clung to a few spindly stems that appeared healthy but far from the robust growth to which I had grown

accustomed. I refused to part with the plant on the basis that if it ever bloomed, it would fill the room with a most intoxicating scent I had experienced many years before, and thus it would be worth the wait. So as instructed, I dosed my struggling stephanotis with the EM mixture. Within two weeks it had grown two feet. I chopped it back and new growth came from the bottom, and today - two years later it is fifteen feet or more having been chopped back several times to increase the leaf density. My stephanotis has yet to bloom, but I am hopeful for next spring as the leaf nodes are becoming closer together.

Subsequently, I tried EM on other indoor plants with considerable success. I confess to neglecting my indoor plants. Being more of an ornamental lover, indoor plants are often the victims of my experiments. But amazingly, the Meyer's lemon fruited, the Christmas cactus bloomed twice and the Amaryllis flowers lasted for weeks. And as a bonus, the Clivia formed two seed pods. Now one could make some deductions about these apparent marvels: the stephanotis was dormant too long, pot bound or just needed more fertilizer; the Meyer's Lemon was finally warm enough; the Clivia was reaching maturity. All fair assumptions, but it was the other plants on which I continued experiments that sealed the deal. A Streptocarpus that was covered in aphids - within 24 hours was aphid free. A tray of fuchsia cuttings watered in with EM rooted earlier and with a larger root ball than a similar tray watered with plain water. A rhododendron showing clear signs of unhappiness - yellowing, stunted, not blooming and not long for this world - never looked back after a shot of EM. Now my back yard garden is a living testament to its effectiveness.

Effective Microorganisms truly live up to the name. Now available in many forms and from many companies, I highly recommend you do your own experiments and test it for yourself. Then you can decide whether it's Myth or Magic.

Are you a Rhodoholic?

Many of you will have seen this in the past...but I think it's worth repeating....

The Nine Stages of Rhodoholism

1. See flowers at Big Box Store
2. Start collecting hybrids
3. Join Rhododendron Society
4. Start collecting species
5. Become obsessed with foliage
6. Buy bigger property
7. Start growing species from seed
8. Make expedition to China
9. Shave head and become a Buddhist Monk (to live amongst beloved rhododendrons)

Seeking Information on a Rhododendron?

Have you tried...

www.hirsutum.info

Great information and photos of many rhododendrons

Thoughts of Spring.....from your Editor, Linda Derkach

As I sit at my window and wonder what tomorrow will bring – wind – sleet – snow – rain... or all four...I know that the winter solstice will soon herald longer days...and thoughts of spring blooms and garden tours.

Some years ago, I was treated to an Open Garden at the home of Lorne and Cindy Hepting. It was here that I first encountered *Rhododendron* 'Medusa' and fell in love at first sight.

Perhaps MARS members will again open their gardens for one or two days this spring and share their glorious gardens with fellow Martians!



Rhododendron 'Medusa' in a large oak barrel in the garden of Lorne and Cindy Hepting.



Rhododendron 'Bow Bells' in Lorne's garden.