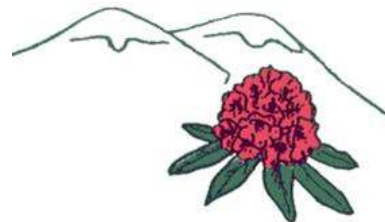


THE RHODOVINE



THE MOUNT ARROWSMITH

MARS

RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

P. O. Box 342

Qualicum Beach. BC

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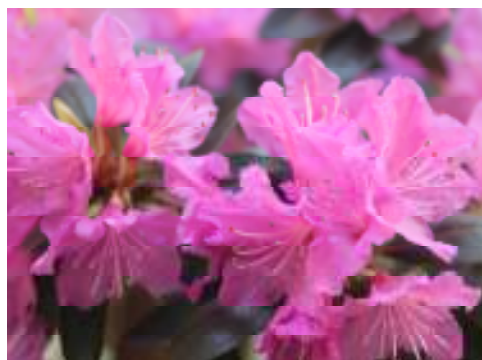
Sunshine – Maria Bieberstein

THIS MONTH:

Bob and Verna Duncan
will speak on growing
fruit trees
and **sub-tropical fruit** in our
West Coast Marine Climate

The Duncans have owned and operated a nursery on the Saanich Peninsula near Victoria for many years.

Come and learn about growing fruit in our temperate climate.



Blooming now - *Rhododendron*

'Checkmate' has a lovely deep mauvy-pink bloom - striking against the still mahogany leaves of winter. *R. 'Checkmate'* is a sport of *R. 'PJM Victor'* developed at Weston Nurseries. It is expected to be about two feet after ten years. Parents are *Rhododendron minus* (Carolinianum Group) and *R. dauricum* (Sempervirens Group).

MARS Meetings

Qualicum Beach

Civic Centre

2nd Wednesday of the month 7:30 pm

Next Meeting

Wednesday,

April 10



Rhododendron 'Tiffany' is a modest-sized, profuse bloomer, covering herself with pink and white blooms in the March sunshine. *R. 'Tiffany'* is a cross of *R. 'Anna Baldisiefen'* and *R. keiskei* and is hardy to -25 C.

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From Your President...

We are now entering the high activity period in the MARS calendar. We have the Plant Sale, the Spring Fling and the Garden Tour all in the next six weeks. I am sure we can look forward to participation from all our members in these activities.

For the **Rhododendron Show and Sale**, we will need volunteers for all the usual jobs which make the sale possible. Please contact **Glen Jamieson** about this, or just turn up at the Curling Club in Parksville as early as you can on April 27. For the **Spring Fling**, we need donations of plants to be sold. Please contact **Marilyn Dawson** for when and how to donate. Finally, the **MARS Garden Tour** needs sitters at the gardens on May 11 or 12, morning or afternoon. Please contact **Kathy Loyer** or **Linda Derkach** to book your space.

The planning for the **2015 ARS Convention in Sidney** is progressing well. It has been decided that the convention will be held at the Mary Winspear Centre in Sidney. Four key speakers are being confirmed. Caterers are being investigated, and accommodations in Victoria and Sidney being assessed. It is expected that a website will be available by May so we can all track progress. The Convention Committee is open to all ideas for making this the best convention that ARS has held, so please contact me with your ideas and I will take them to our committee.

In the meantime, this is the time of year to enjoy working in the garden, so "Happy Gardening" to you all!!

Tony

The editors reserve the right to edit submissions to the newsletter for purposes of consistency, clarity and space restrictions.

MARS Programs in 2013...

April 10 - Verna & Bob Duncan

- ❖ **Pushing the Hardiness Limits:
Fruit Trees and Sub-tropicals**

May 8

- ❖ **Lois Blackmore speaking on the
Barlup Hybrids**

June

- ❖ **MARS Wind-up Party**

Mark Your Calendar...

MARS Rhododendron Show and Sale

Saturday, April 27, 2013
Parksville Curling Club

ARS Convention 2013

Near Seattle/Tacoma Airport
Thursday, May 2 – Sunday, May 5, 2013

MARS Spring Fling Plant Sale

Saturday, May 4, 2013
8:30 am to 12:30 pm

MARS Mothers' Day Weekend Garden Tour

May 11 and 12, 2013

Website News...

MARS Website Refreshed

Check out our website at www.mars.rhodos.ca
Garth Wedemire has updated and refreshed our
website for us
Looking good!!

Many thanks, Garth!!

In Mary Parker's Garden....

Editor's Note: Mary Parker enjoys her fabulous container garden – with many rhododendrons performing amazingly well! While many of us grow a few rhododendrons in pots, Mary has taken it to the “gold standard” demonstrating that rhododendrons can flourish in containers and bring us joy no matter where we live! Here is Mary's story about her spectacular garden....



Rhododendron 'Midnight Mistique'

I have been growing rhododendrons in pots for about 18 years, even when I had dirt and not rocks and clay. At that time fellow rhodoholics didn't think this was such a great idea, but I had run out of room in the garden in Qualicum Beach so my rhododendrons went in pots on the deck and patios. *Rhododendron* 'Point Defiance', for example, grew in a large pot for at least ten years, blooming and looking great until I found a garden home for it. In Nanaimo I still have *R.* 'Queen Anne's' that has been in a pot for 18 years. She is now about five feet wide and about 4 1/2 feet high.



This lovely grouping provides privacy and an attractive place to welcome birds.

When I moved from Qualicum Beach to Nanaimo five years ago I discovered that I lived on solid clay with rocks for a lawn! I planted a three foot rhododendron high with what I thought was a good drainage base, but it died within three months. Everything else stayed in pots or was moved to larger pots. I try to use terracotta colors because the garden is in 80% full sun.



Rhododendron 'Apricot Fantasy'



Rhododendron 'Percy Wiseman'



Rhododendron 'Starry Night'

My planting medium consists of 3 parts bark mulch to one part compost, throwing in some bone meal and Epsom salts. During the summer I put saucers under my pots but some now are too big to lift. The saucers allow the pot to absorb any excess nutrients and water during the heat. I remove them in the fall so the pots have good drainage in our rainy climate.

I find I have to fertilize twice a year, once in early spring and then a light dose the end of May. My plants also get two to three shots of Epsom salts throughout the year. I mix my own fertilizer, the recipe following.

- Two scoops (a scoop is a 500 ml cottage cheese container) each of alfalfa meal, canola meal, bone meal and Epsom salts
- One scoop each of granular moss killer, Green Leaf rhododendron food and dolopril lime. Mix thoroughly before use. This can be adjusted according to your needs.



Rhododendron "Starbright Champagne"

For watering, I installed an automatic watering system with seven zones on two four-outlet manifolds, each with a timer watering a specific area of the garden. Larger pots have two or three sprinklers.



Mary's lush hideaway ... created by containers



This gorgeous autumn scene proves that many shrubs and trees can thrive in a container garden.

I have about 300 pots of all sizes including eight-foot *Thuja occidentalis* (Emerald cedar), several different magnolias, lots of different maples, katsura, locust, poplar, beech, silk tree, cercis (redbud), *Ginkgo biloba*, dogwoods, enkianthus, hamamelis, corylopsis, osmanthus, eucryphia, prunus, hydrangeas and many, many azaleas and rhododendrons from eight-inch *R. litangense* to a six-foot *R. 'Sir Charles Lemon'*.



Rhododendron 'Thor'

Photos by Mary Parker

The wonderful part of pots is that they are all moveable, some easier than others depending on size. If they do not like it in one part of the garden just move it somewhere else. You have no weeding and if you have any bugs in your pots, put in some bird seed and the birds will do the job. The whole garden is hard to photograph and those that have seen the pictures and then come and visit the garden find it hard to believe how colorful and private it is. It has lovely fall color with the maples, witch hazel and hydrangeas.

You could say I have gone to pot!! Now I even plant potatoes in heavy plastic grocery bags!



Rhododendron linearifolium



Rhododendron 'Conroy' can be tricky - mildew being just one challenge - but the rewards of this exquisite coral bloom are worth the effort.

Rhododendron Show

Saturday, April 27, 2013

Procedures and Regulations

Here are the rules for the annual MARS Rhododendron Show and Plant Sale. Following are details of how and when to enter your trusses, i.e. rhododendron 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 rachides 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, are 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, Yellow Collection, Foliage, Lax Truss, Spray, Species large leaf, Species small leaf, Hammerhead, Novice,

Protected, (such as *madenii* and *vireyas* that need winter protection here.)

Tried and True Formula for Healthy Plants and Stunning Blooms

The Four-Step Process to Enter Blooms in the MARS Rhododendron 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.

Here's is the formula recommended by Terry Richmond to help you produce lots of bloom and maintain healthy shrubs.

Terry recommends that the ingredients be mixed well in a wheelbarrow so that the powdered fertilizers occupy the open spaces in the bark mulch, slowing down the release of the fertilizer. As well, Epsom salts can be applied over the growing season when the leaves of your rhodies appear to be short of magnesium sulphate.

1 part magnesium sulphate (Epsom salts)
9 parts Borden's Organic Fertilizer
5 parts worm castings, well-rotted manure or good quality compost
5 parts small bark or fish waste composted in bark (Sea Soil, fish compost)

Spread around the drip line and under rhododendrons to about one inch deep, but not close to the stem.

The ingredients of Borden's Organic Fertilizer are:

- soy meal (7-2-1)
- canola meal (5.5-2-1)
- alfalfa powder (2-.5-1)
- blood and bone meal (4-14-0)
- rock phosphate (0--0)
- kelp meal (1-.5-3)
- dolomite lime (calcium and magnesium)

If you want to make your own organic fertilizer from ingredients available locally, here is a formula:

- 4 parts alfalfa meal
- 4 parts canola meal
- 4 parts blood meal
- 2 parts dolomite lime
- 1 part rock phosphate
- 1 part bone meal
- 1 part kelp meal
- 1 part greensand
- Epsom salts can also be added to this mixture.

Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society

General Meeting

Wednesday March 20, 2013

held at the Civic Centre in Qualicum Beach

7:30 pm

Minutes of the meeting were approved as published in the Rhodovine.

GUESTS: Sue Mclean, Dusan Naus, Auril Barrass, Gordon Barrass, Annette Owen, Shirley Meanwell, Rose Chamulak, Ann Robertson, Gwen Magnus, Isabel Zenuk, Barb Delgatty, Sharon Shepherd, Irene and John Telfer, Louise Kelsey, Skip and Doug Cockburn, Peter and Duane Quily, Robert and Ginette Mackay, Linda Patterson, Vicki Huxtable, Marilyn Henderson

REFRESHMENTS: Provided by: Anne Gutsche, Ann DeBrincat and Marilyn Dawson

BUSINESS ARISING: 1. The business part of the meeting was kept as brief as possible to allow plenty of time for the panelists.

2. Tony said he and Geoff Ball had met this month to start work on a memorandum of understanding about a proposed species garden at Milner Gardens and Woodland. If the project goes forward, it will likely involve all chapters of District One.

3. Last September many MARS members took part in the ARS Fall Conference hosted by the Nanaimo Rhododendron Society. It was a success financially, and as a thank you for help from all island chapters, NRS donated a bursary of \$500 (to be matched by VIU) to a horticulture student. The bursary will continue for three years.

4. Members are reminded that, unlike tonight, our usual meeting is the second Wednesday of the month. Next month's meeting is on April 10.

5. Last year, some of our members opened their gardens to MARS members on three specific weekends. Members who are willing to show off their garden in a casual way should speak to Marilyn Dawson or Tony Ansdell.

6. Marilyn Dawson reminded members to look over their gardens and see what needs to be divided. There's still time to pot up plants for

Spring Fling on May 4.

7. MARS each year offers to subsidize a member attending an ARS convention for the first time. This year, the first person drawn was Joanne Hamilton, who found she could not go after all. After a second draw, Maria Bieberstein was the lucky winner to the May convention in Seattle.

TREASURER: Bert Harding said MARS finances are in good shape - roughly where we should be for this time of year.

MEMBERSHIP: Tony reported we had 66 memberships at the beginning of the evening, adding one more with Barb Delgatty joining this evening.

PROGRAM: Linda Derkach will moderate the evening's panel of Don Bridgen, Terry Richmond and John England on the year-round care of rhododendrons. At next month's meeting, Bob Duncan and his wife will talk about their success growing tender fruit trees on the island.

EVENTS:

TRUSS SHOW— Chairman Glen Jamieson was out of town, but Tony said plans seem to be progressing. A pile of posters were brought to the meeting for members to take and hand out.

GARDEN TOUR— Kathy Loyer said the sign-up board was on hand for sitters to sign up for the May 11 and 12 event. The tickets are ready to be printed. Linda said she would like the board to be filled in as quickly as possible.

WAYS AND MEANS: The door prize, *Rhododendron* 'Girard's Crimson' was won by Joan Cavers. Other prizes were: *R.* 'Alice', *R.* 'Molly Ann' and *R.* 'Mindy's Love'.

SPEAKERS: The three panelists provided a lively exchange with members about the care of rhododendrons through the year, ranging from winter and wind damage to pests, diseases and fertilizing. Some of the questions and answers may be covered in future issues of the Rhodovine.

Meeting adjourned: 9:45 pm