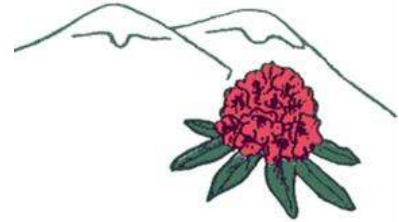


THE RHODOVINE



**THE MOUNT ARROWSMITH
RHODODENDRON SOCIETY**

MARS
P. O. Box 342
Qualicum Beach. BC

Volume 25, Issue 10

DECEMBER 2013

2013/2014 Executive

President

Linda Derkach
752-3545 lindaderkach@shaw.ca

Vice-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

Tony Ansdell
752-4475 ansdella@shaw.ca

Directors

Don Bridgen
723-3916 dabridgen@gmail.com

Ann DeBrincat
724-5594 darrylhatch@shaw.ca

Maria Bieberstein
468-7252 abieberstein@telus.net

Kathy Loyer
738-0138 kathyloyer@shaw.ca

Ray Walker
248-5138 jrjiffy@shaw.ca

Bursary – Tony Ansdell

Christmas Party

Dollar Table - Cassy LaCouvee

Newsletter Editor - Linda Derkach

Garden Tour – Kathy Loyer

Truss Show – Ray Walker

Greeter – Guy Loyer

Historian - Cassy Lacouvee

Library – Donna deBoer

Meeting Coordinator- Tony Ansdell

Membership – Tony Ansdell

Milner Gardens - John England

Program Chair - Ann DeBrincat

PR - Marilyn Dawson

Refreshments - Anne Gutsche

Sunshine – Maria Bieberstein

THIS MONTH:



Christmas Party Rotary House Corner Fern & Beach Qualicum Beach

Please come to our annual
Christmas Pot Luck Party
**Saturday, December 7
at 5:30 pm.**

Don't forget to bring a beverage
of your choice and a uniquely-
wrapped present valued up to
\$10 for our gift exchange.

**We welcome donations to the
local Food Bank.**

**We look forward to
seeing you there!**

And please bring the potluck dish
you signed up for at the November
meeting...or call Marilyn Dawson.

MARS Meetings

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

Next Meeting

**Wednesday,
January 8**

**Panel of Experts... to
start the gardening
year off right!**

**John Deniseger and Art
Lightburn** - both members of
the Nanaimo Rhododendron
Society and recognized experts
in the field - will share their
gardening wisdom, answer
questions and help get our
gardening season off to a good
start.

This is a great program to bring
a friend - especially those who
are fairly new to rhododendrons
or who need more information
to make the most of their
specimens.

Inside.....

Ciscoe Morris	Page 2
Events, Minutes.....	Page 3
Sidney Convention 2015.....	Page 4
Pink Mountain.....	Page 5
ARS Store.....	Page 6
Propagating	Page 7
Garden Journal.....	Page 9

MARS Welcomes *Ciscoe Morris* in February 2014

On Wednesday, February 12, MARS will present Ciscoe Morris, Seattle TV personality and well-known Pacific NorthWest gardening expert. And we are welcoming the community as well...so spread the word...bring your friends!!



Gardening and dogs are his passion.



Ciscoe leads garden tours all over the world.



His book, Ask Ciscoe, was among the top selling garden books nationwide. In addition, he co-authored books on roses and perennials, and he also writes a weekly garden column in the Thursday edition of the Seattle Times.



Snippets from Your Executive...

- ❖ Our March meeting will be held one week later than usual due to an event at the Civic Centre March 19 is the new date.
- ❖ MARS members are encouraged to bring a friend to our meetings. We have great programs coming up....good information for everyone. Invite your neighbours too!

MARS Programs in 2014....

January 2014

- ❖ Panel of Local Experts
 - ✓ Art Lightburn and
 - ✓ John Denesiger of the Nanaimo RS.

February 2014

- ❖ Ciscoe Morris of Seattle TV Fame
 - ✓ Creating a Wildlife Friendly Garden

Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society General Meeting

Held at Qualicum Beach Civic Centre
Wednesday, November 13, 2013 at 7:30 pm

GUESTS: Sixteen visitors

SPEAKER – Ron Long on Pink Mountain

After welcoming everyone, President Linda Derkach turned the mike over to Ann DeBrincat to introduce the speaker, Ron Long, a passionate defender of Pink Mountain in northern B.C. A retired photographer from Simon Fraser University, Mr. Long's photographs of the flora and fauna of Pink Mountain provided a fascinating

introduction to the message of the evening - that the ecology of the mountain was in grave danger because of the presence of man in many forms – hunter, yahoo and potential solar wind farmers. He sought the chapter's support in joining a UBC-backed push to document the plant and animal life which would be presented to the government for action.

Mr. Long hopes a portion of the mountain with its rare plant life, much of it endangered or threatened, can be preserved for further study.

BUSINESS ARISING: Due to the length of the evening's program, the business meeting was kept short.

1. A sign-up sheet was passed around so members could indicate their pot luck dish for the Christmas party on Dec. 7.

2. Members were also reminded about the gift exchange at the Dec. 7 event and also something for the Food Bank.

3. Well known garden broadcaster Ciscoe Morris will be our speaker for the February meeting. Members were asked to note the date and pass it along to friends. Non-members will pay \$5 at the door.

4. The March meeting will be held one week later than usual due to a schedule conflict with the hall. The new date is March 19.

5. Kathy Loyer has lined up 12 gardens for the Garden Tour and will be meeting with her committee in the New Year.

6. Members were reminded that 2014 membership fee is due. Tony Ansdell is the person to see.

7. The bus tour is planned for the week of April 29 to May 8 and will be to the Victoria/Saanich area.

Members will decide whether they want a one or two-day event.

DRAWS: The door prize, *Rhododendron* 'Trilby' was won by Valerie Melanson. Other prizes were *R. williamsianum* and *R. 'Very Berry'*.

Meeting adjourned: 9:50 pm



The orange berries of Cotoneaster brighten dull winter days.

Getting Ready for ARS Convention 2015 in Sidney

From Ken Webb, ARS District 1 Director

In preparation for the 2015 ARS Convention in Sidney, the District 1 organizing committee is asking for submissions to the ARS journal from writers in this area. The committee welcomes articles on gardens and tourist attractions to advertise the convention to the world, and let people know about our beautiful Vancouver Island.

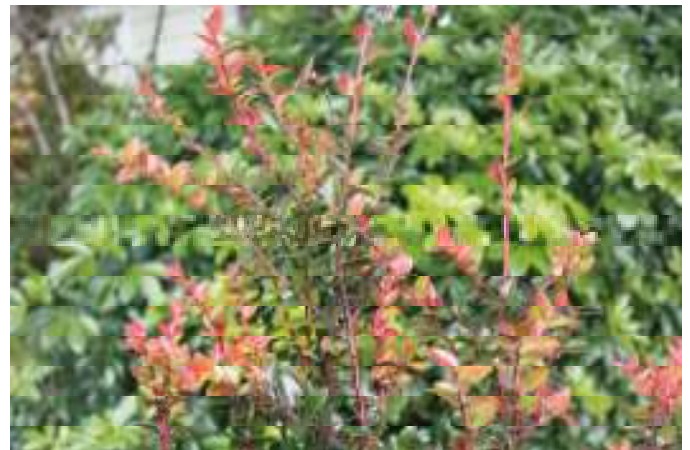
To all the writers out there, this is your chance to be published in a worldwide publication. This is the 70th anniversary of the ARS and we want to make this convention extra special by letting folks know about the spectacular gardens and other points of interest here in BC.

The ARS Board has just voted to increase the colour pages in the Journal from 16 up to 36, so there should be lots of room for beautiful color pictures with your articles. Anything that promotes our beautiful District 1 will be considered. Articles should be submitted as soon as possible over the next few months so that they can be worked into the next few editions of JARS.

So please select a favourite garden or attraction, write a brief article with photos and submit to Glen Jamieson at ars.editor@gmail.com.



Skimmia japonica 'Rubella' is a reliable winter garden evergreen, quietly blooming every year and happy in the shade.



Vaccinium ovatum (native evergreen huckleberry) boasts copper/red foliage in fall and winter. Tiny pale pink bell-shaped flowers bloom in late spring against masses of glossy green leaves. Flowers are followed by edible black berries. Grow in acidic soil in sun or part shade - a wonderful rhododendron companion.

More on Pink Mountain

Following up from our November Presentation with Ron Long...many of you expressed an interest in supporting the research project on plant and animal diversity on Pink Mountain. Here is information about the research and information on how to make a donation to support this project.

Pink Mountain Biodiversity Research Initiative

Resource development threatens the unique biodiversity of Pink Mountain. A two-year letter writing campaign has not convinced the Provincial Government of the special nature of this Mountain. More work needs to be done. To this end the UBC Botanical Garden, The Natural History Society and the Native Plant Society are spearheading a research plan that is aimed at quantifying scientifically the unique aspects of Pink Mountain.

The research will look at:

What is there?

No comprehensive survey has ever been carried out on Pink Mountain. We are in danger of losing the entire mountaintop before we even know what is there.

Plants

Limited plant collections on Pink Mountain have already identified one red listed (in danger of extirpation) and no less than ten blue listed (seriously threatened) species on the summit. This is huge and the conservation data centre confirms that no other site of its size in the province north of Vancouver is known to have so many listed species. How many more will a thorough survey of plants uncover?

Soil sampling

The research will examine why Pink Mountain has so many rare plants when similar peaks nearby, have none.



Rhododendron lapponicum

Bird use of the area

Wind farms are very destructive to birds particularly if they are located on a migration route. Nothing is known about the birds on Pink Mountain.

Bat use of the area

Even more than birds, Bats are endangered by wind farms. Again migration routes are a concern and again nothing is known.

Rare Butterflies

In the butterfly community Pink Mountain is known worldwide as a place to collect rare butterflies. A complete survey of butterflies on Pink Mountain is required. One red listed butterfly species is known and more are likely.

Insects

In 2010 a minor study identified a Mason Bee species on Pink Mountain that had never before been recorded in British Columbia. This is an illustration of how little is known about the insects in the area.

Sub Alpine plants

We would like to know what conditions exist on Pink Mountain that allow subalpines to grow on tundra which is far outside their normal comfort zone.

Orchids

What conditions allow two species of orchids, one of which is rare in the province, to survive on the summit of Pink Mountain. Tundra is not a known habitat for these orchids.

The research budget is \$34,600 and fundraising is off to a good start. The Native Plant society, Nature Vancouver and the Alpine Garden club have already pledged nearly \$14,000. We have commitments of services in kind to the value of \$43,000 from the Royal BC Museum, UBC, SFU, as well as a number of committed individuals. Obviously much more is needed so we are appealing to organizations and individuals for help.

If you would like to contribute funds please make cheques payable to the **Vancouver Natural History Society** with the notation *Pink Mountain*.

Mail cheques to:

Jeremy McCall
C/O Vancouver Natural History Society
PO Box 3021, Vancouver, BC V6B3X5

Please include your Name, Address, Phone number and Email address.

A tax-deductible receipt will be issued.

Contact Ron Long for further information.

rphoto@shaw.ca



Alpine Penstemon on Pink Mountain

ARSStore.org - The new ARS Online Store, where Every Amazon.com purchase benefits the ARS

At the October 4, 2013, ARS Board of Directors meeting, the Board authorized the creation of an online ARS site that would not be directly selling items but would link to other providers. The Online Store was authorized to develop a relationship with amazon.com as an affiliate store. The Online Store was also authorized to use the ARS logo and name to sell logo merchandise. Product providers accessed through the ARS Online Store at ARSStore.org will pay a commission to the ARS on sales made from referrals. These commissions from sales referrals come back 100 % to the ARS.

ARSStore.org has no expenses, only earnings.

The store currently has two divisions:

ARS Logo Merchandise: knit, woven and denim shirts, caps, visors, and computer briefcases.

Amazon.com Merchandise: featuring Rhododendron & Azalea Books, Garden Books, Garden Tools, and any other item sold on Amazon.com.

To access either division, just go to ARSStore.org and from there select what interests you. Amazon.com sells just about everything. You get the same low Amazon prices from the ARS store but by using it, the ARS gets a commission for referring you. As long as you go to Amazon.com from ARSStore.org before making a purchase, the ARS gets a referral fee.

All purchases made after entering ARSStore.org and using links on ARSStore.org will be eligible for commissions to the ARS. On Amazon.com, the inclusion of "amerirhodoc" in the page URL indicates a referral from the ARSStore.org.

Once you enter Amazon.com from ARSStore.org, the connection may time out after several hours of no activity, so make sure you always enter Amazon.com from ARSStore.org.

You may wonder if people who are not members of the ARS may use ARSStore.org. Yes, most certainly! The objective of creating the ARSStore website is to raise money for the ARS. The more money we raise, the better it is for the ARS. **Invite all of your friends to use it.** There are **illustrated links** you can use for email as well as **print ads** you can use for newsletters and other printed media. Invite your favorite nurseries to add links to ARSStore.org.

In summary, at ARSStore.org, every purchase from Amazon you make results in a contribution to the ARS at no additional cost either to you or to the ARS.

Why Not Try Propagating Rhododendrons by Air and Ground Layering

By Linda Derkach

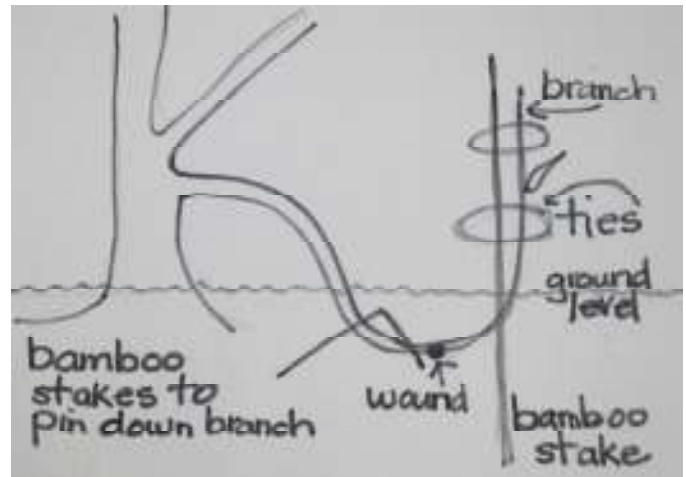
From a presentation at the ARS Newport, Oregon Conference by John Hammond, President of the Scottish Rhododendron Society

Ground Layering

Plant propagation methods such as seeding, plant division and layering have been practiced for many years. According to John Hammond, President of the Scottish Rhododendron Society and an acknowledged expert in the field, past methods of ground layering low branches of woody shrubs such as rhododendrons have some drawbacks: new growth is usually not vertical, the rocks used to hold branches down can stop root growth in cold weather, and the rocks stay very cold, further inhibiting root growth.

John uses a method of ground layering rhododendrons that he created by first selecting a suitable branch for layering, making a cut or wound from where the new roots will emerge, and then pinning the branch down below ground level with the wound underground. He then bends the end of the branch up above ground level, securely staking it to vertical bamboo shoots.

Bamboo is used because it does not rot. The stakes will not inhibit root growth, and the vertical stakes ensure that the new plant will be growing vertically rather than at an angle. And while it may take two to three years for the layering to produce a good root system, it may be the only successful way to propagate some of the species such as *Rhododendron macabeanum* and *R. sinogrande*.



When brown roots are evident, the new plant is ready to pot up. If roots are still white, the plant is not yet ready to be separated from the mother plant.

Air Layering

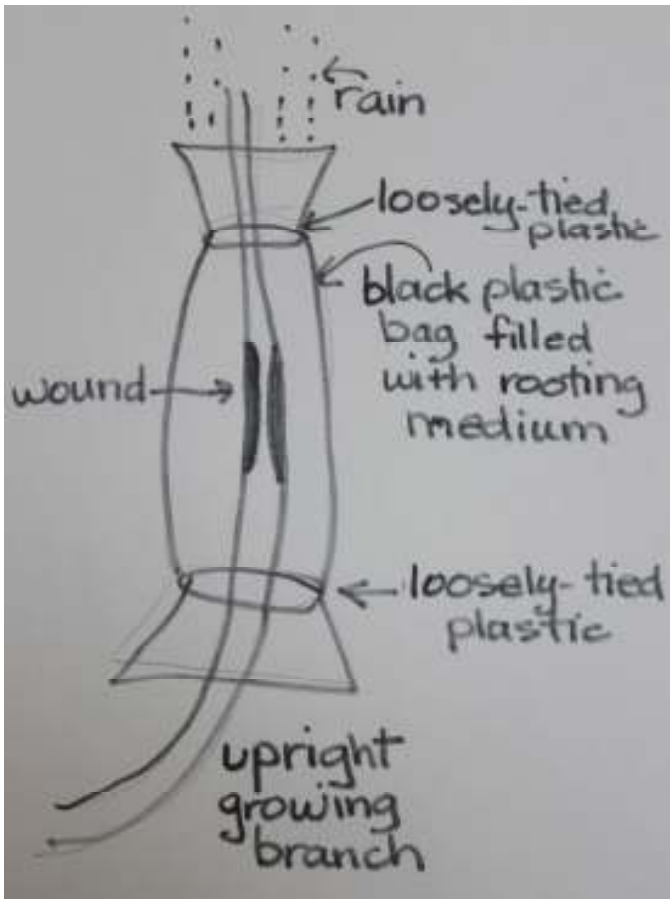
Again, this method can be used with species that are notoriously difficult to propagate in other ways. Supplies needed are: large black plastic bag, sphagnum moss, bark mulch, plastic ties.

Select a strong, viable branch – preferably upright - with a space of 18 inches in which to work.

Prepare the rooting medium by liquefying sphagnum moss in an old food processor and mixing with an equal amount of finely chopped bark mulch in a two gallon bucket. Moisten the mixture. You will need about one litre of the moss and bark mulch mixture.

Wound four inches on both sides of the branch. Hold the whole litre in your hand, put around the branch at the wound, and wrap tightly with the black plastic bag. Put a plastic tie on loosely on the bottom. Then do the top in the same way. You do not want an airtight seal as the roots need oxygen to grow.

With the plastic bag forming a cup around the branch at the top, rain can go in and leach down and out the bottom. Do not use rooting hormone as it can induce rot.



Label and date what you have done.

Be sure to use a large black plastic bag – you want the plant to think that it is underground. After three years, you should have a good root system.

Be sure to check your work to make sure rain water is getting in and leaching out and that the new roots are not drying out or water-logged.

This method can be used successfully on deciduous azaleas as well. Remove the tongue when wounding. After a few years, the plant will figure out that it is going to lose the branch and consequently put out new growth at the bottom.

It is best to put the air layering at the back of the plant out of the sun. If it is too dry – not

enough rain – pour water in the top of the layering. Taller plants may need tying to another branch for stability.

It is important not to use twist tie. Plastic tie is best and be sure to check ties annually. John recommends air layering if a plant has become too tall and gangly. You can do this at any time of the year, but spring is best.

If you have a favourite rhododendron that is dying back, you can propagate a new plant using this method, but you will need to feed it regularly as it won't be getting sustenance from the mother plant's root system. Feed with diluted tomato food and put in the top of the layering pack.

Once you have some good new roots, always plant up in pots. John recommends planting the new plant diagonally in the pot, and staked in the middle to ensure it grows vertically. Use the same formula for the potting medium – equal parts of spagnum moss and bark mulch. This method should also work on Japanese maples.



Rhododendron 'Taurus' is a wonderful four-season shrub...fabulous flower trusses in April, bright red new growth, luscious deep green leaves year round and perky red flower buds through winter anxious to bloom in spring.

Garden Journal

Linda Derkach, MARS President

Like many of you, my ambition is to create a four-season garden. So even on this late November day – after considerable wind and freezing temperatures – I can enjoy a walk around and delight in horticultural treasures. Here is what I found today!



New to my garden is *Stachys byzantina* 'Helen von Stein'. With woolly, grey-green leaves, this stachys provides contrast to surrounding plants and hugs the ground. So far the deer have not nibbled.



Ilex x 'Rock Garden' glows in an alpine dish or rock garden – and is deer resistant. In a container it can be positioned close to the house or garden path for year-round enjoyment.



I love epimediums....for dry shade, delicate early spring flowers, mottled leaves that turn green during summer – then capped off with this burnished copper foliage in winter – what more could a gardener need in a hard-working, dependable, unfussy evergreen. Don't forget to cut back foliage in early February before the new flowers emerge. New leaves will emerge following the floral display that includes yellow, orange, pink and mauve.



Small, tough, cold tolerant and a prolific and long bloomer – what's not to like about *Rhododendron* 'Ptarmigan'. This tiny rhododendron is handsome year round. Position near a path where you can admire every day – you will not be disappointed.



Hydrangeas are great companions for rhododendrons, both relish acidic soil with the hydrangea bloom following most rhododendrons – a perfect pairing. *Hydrangea quercifolia* ‘Little Honey’ has never bloomed in my garden, but the golden leaves glow through spring and summer, while in fall and winter the veins are tinged scarlet/copper.



Most rhododendron aficionados love cyclamen! What’s not to love – distinctive green and silver designs – unique to each cultivar – quietly increasing in size while providing interesting ground cover beneath rhododendrons. My favourite is *Cyclamen coum* (above). The leaves push through autumn debris, and then in January brilliant pink, magenta or white flowers emerge through the snow or whatever the weather brings. Grow in fertile, humus-rich, well-drained soil in part shade. And make note of where they are planted so that you don’t accidentally dig and fatally wound the tuber while lying dormant in summer just one to two inches below soil level.



In the shadiest part of my garden, I collect small ferns. *Asplenium trichomanes* (Maidenhair spleenwort) is mostly evergreen, with delicate fronds 4 to 8 inches long on black or dark brown stalks. This hardy fern contrasts its companion - the more robust *Asplenium scolopendrium* Crispum Group (Crested Hart’s Tongue fern).



Seedheads are important for a number of reasons – besides being uniquely beautiful, many provide food for beneficial insects and often a winter home for tiny bugs. Golden Rod (above) is one such plant. Here *Solidago canadensis* ‘Baby Gold’ is shorter than the species, with spathes of golden flowers producing nectar-rich tiny flowers for bees and other beneficials. These lovely silver/gray seedheads are just too beautiful and useful to cut down until spring when new growth begins.