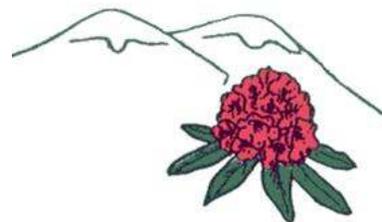


# THE RHODOVINE



THE MOUNT ARROWSMITH  
RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

MARS  
P. O. Box 342  
Qualicum Beach. BC

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## This Month: Companion Planting for Rhododendrons

Robert Argall of the North Island Rhododendron Society will share his planting techniques for a fabulous spring garden.

The focus will be on the spring garden, but he will also include tips and techniques for adding companion plants to a large rhododendron collection.

Please see page 2 for more about our guest Robert Argall.



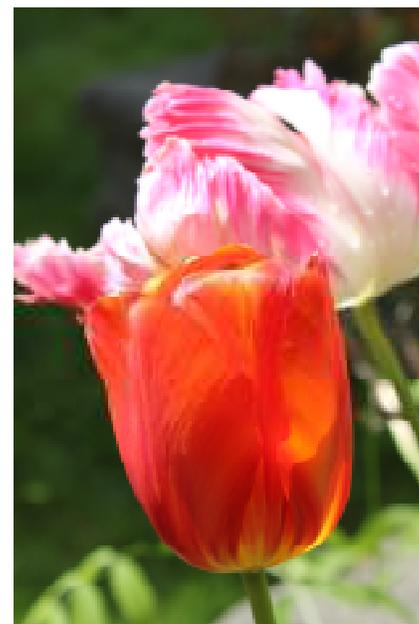
*Puschkinia scilloides* blooms in March under rhododendrons and is deer resistant.

## MARS Meetings

2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month at 7:30 pm  
Qualicum Beach  
Civic Centre

### Next Meeting

**Wednesday,  
September 10  
7:30 pm**



It's time to plant bulbs for a colourful spring garden.

### Inside.....

Bronze Medal winner.....	Page 2
Robert Argall.....	Page 2
MARS 25 <sup>th</sup> .....	Page 3
President's Message .....	Page 4
Trillium .....	Page 5
Coleton Fishacre.....	Page 8
New Book .....	Page 10

## Bert Harding Honoured With ARS Bronze Medal

*At our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration on June 22, 2014, MARS presented hard-working member Bert Harding with the chapter's highest award – the Bronze Medal. The wording of this honour follows.*



**This award is in recognition of Bert's long-standing service to MARS. Since he joined many years ago, he has been a cheerful, willing volunteer taking on any task requested. Over the years he has worn many hats, most recently that of highly valued treasurer. He has organized general meetings, served on committees, including two successful seasons as chair of the Truss Show; his beautiful garden has been on the annual MARS Garden Tour. It is with great pleasure we recognize this outstanding service with the chapter's highest honor, the Bronze Medal.**

## *Robert Argall's Horticultural History*

*Those of you lucky enough to tour Robert's garden several years ago with the NIRS can attest to the amazing beauty and lush growth created by Robert on a hill overlooking Georgia Strait.*

Robert moved to the Comox Valley 42 years ago after university to teach high school English and Social Studies. His garden, initially only grass, some bushes, and trees, has evolved substantially, with three of his seven acres now landscaped. He comes from a gardening family as his great grandfather came to Victoria in the 1880's and started the first commercial greenhouses there. His talk will focus on the spring garden, but will extend into seeing the garden at various times. It will show what can be done to add to a garden which has a large collection of rhododendrons. Robert plants about 3,000 new bulbs each year in the autumn to accompany his early blooming rhododendrons, and his presentation will include some of these bulbs in bloom.

## *Upcoming Programs*

### *October 2014*

- *Bees and Pollination – Brenda Jager*

# 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary a Resounding Success

MARS members certainly know how to party, and our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration was no exception as over 80 current, past and founding members of MARS came together to mark this achievement. In addition to awarding the Bronze Medal, MARS acknowledged members who have served quietly and faithfully over many years.

So honoured were Anne Gutsche, Sandra Hemsworth, Skip and Doug Cockburn, Mike and Joan Rich, and Val Rhodes and Dan Schwartz. All these folks have contributed in important ways to ensure our meetings and activities purr along smoothly without too many bumps or hiccoughs.



*For many years now, reliable volunteer Anne Gutsche has ensured that coffee, tea and goodies were plentiful at our general meetings. Thanks for taking care of our culinary needs.*



*Sandra Hemsworth sells the raffle tickets at our meetings, and patiently reminds us at each meeting the price of the tickets and takes care of the draws. Many thanks, Sandra.*



*Skip and Doug Cockburn work tirelessly in their garden, and are always happy to share the beauty they have created. Many times, they have graciously offered their garden for our tour – and always to the delight and amazement of visitors.*



*Fabulous weather, good friends and scrumptious food – what more could we ask for!*

## ***From your President...***

*Linda Derkach*

### ***Taking Stock...***

Summer holidays are over for lots of folks, so it must be time to grab the secateurs, rake and shovel and get back out in the garden. Pruning, clean-up, planting winter veggies, preparing our rhododendrons and other shrubs for the winter - we gardeners have lots to do! Considering the summer drought and record sunshine, my rhododendrons fared very well with few sun-scorched leaves. Heavy mulching and adequate watering saw them through. And the sunny weather predicted for the next week or so is a good time to take stock of where spring bulbs can be tucked to offer joyous splashes of colour in the first gray days of early spring. Don't wait like me until November or December when the cold and rain make bulb-planting miserable.



*Iris reticulata* in a shallow pan is easy and gorgeous!

And if bending and digging are no longer on your list of desirable tasks, large pots of bulbs can be planted now (at potting bench

height) and over-wintered in a fairly protected spot. When they come into bloom, place out among your shrubs and remove when looking rag-tag - an easy way to put colour in the garden!

### ***Looking Forward...***

On September 10, MARS welcomes its members and friends back for another exciting year of fun and friendship! As they say - in this organization we work hard and we play hard!! We have lots of exciting events to tempt, including:

- Western Regional Conference in Everett, September 26 to 28, 2014
- New Zealand 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference, October 20 to 24, 2014
- MARS Christmas Party - December 2014
- Rhododendron Show and Sale - April 2015
- MARS Garden Tour - May 2015
- ARS 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Convention in Sidney, BC - May 6 to 10, 2015

***Come and join us - and bring a friend!!***



*Crocus 'Yellow Mammoth'* is like sunshine!

# Trillium

*Kim Hammond of Milner Gardens and fellow Martian shares some practical and technical information about one of our favourite early spring flowers - the trillium.*



The Trillium species of plants are the woodland favourites of many and after several years of working at Milner Gardens I have come to genuinely appreciate their uniqueness. Several varieties and colours are available at local garden centres. They are adaptable to most soil and shade conditions, require little attention if any, and yet are one of the few plants that will definitely stop me in my tracks as I walk through the garden. A drift of ten or more of them in one particular spot is my “ahhhh” moment every year and watching them change colour, and fade away while I wait, not so patiently, for the seeds is a staple of my year’s work. They may be the official Ontario provincial flower but they are as much a part of the west coast as our native Dogwood.

Trillium species include the Wake Robin (name attributed to the awakening of spring with the return of the robins), Stinking Benjamin and Wet Dog Trillium (attributed to the “odor” of some species which attracts insects for pollination as it’s too cold for bee pollination).

Once of the family of Liliaceae, previously Trilliaceae (Lindley 1846), trilliums are now in their own recently renamed family Melanthiaceae (2003) - a spring flowering, shade loving,

ephemeral blooming in April and May. It is a subterranean rhizome and the fruit is a three valved glabrous berry. Melanthiaceae includes the genus Paris, Daiswa, Kinugasa and Trillium. DNA studies put Trillium and Paris, once separated in Trilliaceae, now included in Melanthiaceae. (It depends on whether you are a lumpener or a splitter!) Approximately 30 species of Trillium exist, most of which originate in North America although several are found in North East Asia and Western Himalaya. Trilliums are true to form for the lily family in that all components of the plant are in threes: petals, sepals, stamens and leaves (although there are occasional oddities with four leaves). Colours range from white to red, including a yellow, *Trillium luteum*. Trilliums prefer a humus rich, aerated soil, neutral to slightly acid, in dappled shade. They are pollinated by ants, flies and beetles.

Considered by many a specialty plant, it is therefore only bought (can be pricey), grown (early culture is very specific) and propagated (not for the impatient) by true plant lovers or those with a penchant for a challenge. While there are several ways to propagate trilliums - from division, rhizome slicing or scoring and even tissue culture - the most difficult is by seed.

Seed propagated trilliums are the most time consuming as, depending on who you believe, it can take from one to seven years to get a flowering plant from seed. The issue had been the double dormancy of trillium seed similar to germinating seeds of the Peony species, *Tropaeolum speciosum* and some Daphne species. New information (Solt) indicates that what was previously conceived as a trillium seed dormancy issue is, in her opinion, actually an embryo dormancy issue.

According to the International Plant Propagator Society, “the simplest example of seeds with morphophysiological dormancy require warm (> 15 C) temperature to permit embryo growth followed by cold (1 to 10 C) temperature conditions to break physiological dormancy. The most extreme example is epicotyl dormancy. These seeds have separate dormancy conditions for the radicle and

epicotyl. Seeds require a chilling period to relieve radicle dormancy, followed by a warm period to allow the radicle to grow, then a second cold period to release the epicotyl from dormancy. In nature, such seeds require at least two full growing seasons to complete germination. Examples include bloodroot (*Sanguinaria*), trillium, and lily-of-the-valley (*Convallaria*).

The capsule of seeds, some varieties containing up to 200 seeds, dehisces upon maturity and if not monitored diligently (as in daily) to determine the best collection time, we (as in humans) are in direct competition with mice and birds, but mostly ants. Now any garden worth its salt has ants, if nothing else to farm the aphids or perhaps to clean the peonies but ants are vital to the survival of trilliums in the wild, yet they are the bane of our existence for those of us who “wait one more day” for the seeds to show the perfect collection ripeness of just changing from green to brown. Ants are attracted to and eat the spongy eliasome attached to the trillium seed. Once the seed capsule is split, the odor brings the ants and you lose your seeds.

### Fun Facts to Know and Share



Figure 1: Ants carrying trillium seeds

The ants carry the trillium seed by the eliasome as far as thirty feet, and eat the eliasome that protrudes and is attached to it, itself as a food source. In so doing, the ants provide two services: first, the cleaning off of the eliasome /protective coating releasing the seed coat from its protective cover and allowing it to imbibe water and starting

the reproductive process; and secondly, the movement of the seed away from its original point, preventing overcrowding, reducing competition and spreading the plant around the area.

### Propagating by Seed

If we are fortunate enough to beat the ants to it, the whole pod should be collected. In fact, if monitoring well, and you have counted the number of pods per plant, one or two missing pods will tell you that they are ready to collect. If ready, don't wait but harvest right away. If collecting from the wild, take only 5% of the seed in any one spot leaving the bulk to reproduce naturally. If collecting early to prevent ant thievery keep the seed in the fridge until ready to clean. If they do get a little moldy they can be washed off gently and sown.

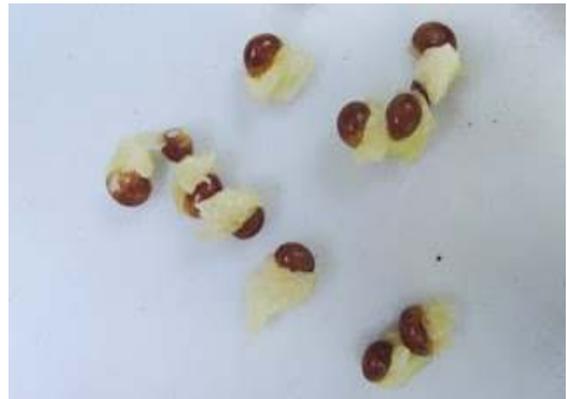


Figure 2: Trillium eliasome

Once trillium seed is collected it has to be cleaned gently but thoroughly before sowing to remove the protective layer and its eliasome. (Figure 2) It is sown to twice the depth of the seed diameter although this is a recommendation only and in fact they can be sown slightly deeper because once the radicle emerges it can push the seed toward the surface. Sow in very well drained medium, water in well and continue to water regularly throughout the season. Regular watering prevents premature dormancy and allows photosynthesis to continue increasing the energy reserves. Place on the north side of a sheltered area for up to two years. Seeds will also persist in the soil if soil moisture remains constant. Always keep your original seeding flat one year past the original sowing as some of the younger, smaller seeds may germinate the following year.

Trilliums require a cold - warm - cold stratification sequence. After a cold stratification period of approximately three months, the seed softens sufficiently for the radicle to emerge during the following warm spell (the first spring after sowing) then goes dormant the following winter. In the second spring a single leaf will (may) come through. If all goes well, i.e., enough moisture throughout the summers and not over wet in the winters, no animal disturbance, and not trampled by an overabundance of foot traffic, perhaps one true heart shaped leaf will show through in the third spring. The full three leaves will appear in year four, albeit in miniature, and by year five through seven with all conditions optimal, a flower. Flowering occurs when the rhizome is sufficiently large enough to have the energy reserves needed to support the flowering period.

Of course there is a simpler way....two in fact.

### **Propagation by Division**

Division leads to a flowering plant much sooner than by seed - usually in two to three years. When the foliage starts to fade, somewhere between June and July lift the whole rhizome gently and divide with a sharp knife, ensuring that each cut has a bud and some roots. Replant with plenty of leaf mold and water in. Water management is crucial at this stage - too much may result in rot, too little in desiccation both from summer heat and lesser uptake from transplant shock.



*Figure 3: Trillium divisions*

Another method - the preferred method for “quick” flowering - is to gently scrape away the soil down to the rhizome surface. Make a v-shaped cut in the top of the larger piece of rhizome, recover with soil and leave it until the following spring.

There should be several small bulbils that, once removed, planted and grown on, will produce a flowering plant in one to three years.

A similar method called “scraping” on the RHS website suggests that removing the soil gently and scraping the surface of the lateral branches of the rhizomes will produce a similar result.

### **Tissue Culture**

Yet another method is the Tissue Culture process. Small pieces of the plant are placed on an agar surface under sterile conditions. The agar is specifically concocted for a trillium’s nutritional needs. Once sealed in large growing tubes the plant pieces are grown on under full spectrum lights in warm rooms. Monitored daily and carefully, the food supply and the specialty hormones contained in the agar create exemplary conditions for reproduction and produces many smaller plants called explants. These explants are further divided, several times - again under sterile conditions - until they are large enough to tolerate being handled, and to survive life “outside the tube”. The tissue culture process is time and labour intensive and therefore the cost of trilliums propagated in this way are more expensive. The bonus is that they will produce flowers sooner.

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Stephanie Solt Propagation Protocol for Trillium, 2002

Trilliums by Chrys Gardener of Master Gardeners

**Eaglecrest Garden Club**  
**Invites you...**  
**Wednesday, September 17 at 7:00 pm**  
**QB Civic Centre**

**Brad Jalbert**  
**“Today’s Healthy Roses”**  
**\$5 at the door.**

# Coleton Fishacre a Hidden Treasure

Linda Derkach

*Nestled in a tranquil and sheltered valley in Devon, England, Coleton Fishacre has it all: spring blooming rhododendrons, tender plants from South Africa and New Zealand plus exciting summer perennials*

Coleton Fishacre is situated down the road from Kingswear near Dartmouth, Devon. The elegant Arts and Crafts style house, former country home of the D'Oyly Carte family (of Gilbert and Sullivan fame) sits on a bluff over-looking a wide-range of plantings, including drought tolerant sun-lovers from the Mediterranean and South Africa to tree ferns from New Zealand. Ponds and bogs provide home to gunnera and winding paths lead down to wind-swept beaches of the English Channel. This is a garden for all seasons, and well cared for by the National Trust. My August visit to this exciting garden - along with a visit to Greenway, home of Agatha Christie - was a highlight of my visit to Devon and Totnes in the southwest of England.



The "hot garden" surrounds the old stone house at Coleton Fishacre with dahlias, heleniums, zauschneria, fuchsia, salvias, eucomis, crocosmia and cannas in profusion.



Several varieties of Eucomis from the damp meadows of South Africa made a striking scene.



Many cultivars of Kniphofia (Red Hot Poker) in shades of orange, red, coral and yellow lit up the garden.



This fuchsia bears flowers and fruit at the same time – here flourishing in the shaded woodland valley leading to the beach at Coleton Fishacre.



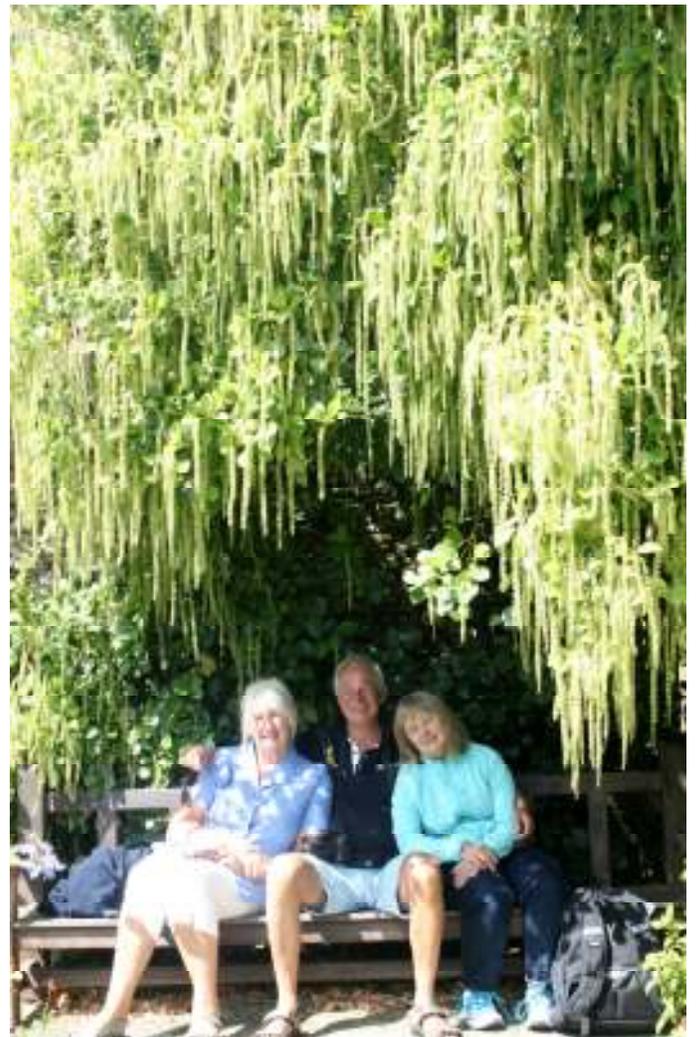
Huge swathes of *Zauschneria californica* (California fuchsia) survive happily in the almost sub-tropical climate of southwest England.



*Tigridia pavonia* is a native of the dry sands and grassland of Mexico and Guatemala.



An old walled garden was a pastel profusion of salvias, liatris, diascia, roses, verbena, fuchsia, Shasta daisies and lilies.



This magnificent *Itea ilicifolia* provided much-needed shade from the August sun for some weary hikers.

And at nearby **Greenway**, the stylish country home of Agatha Christie and her second husband...much restoration was underway by the National Trust.



While the gardens are awaiting restoration, this lovely specimen of *Clerodendrum bungei* was flourishing in the cool, shaded walk from the house to the River Dart.

## New **Compendium of Rhododendron and Azalea Diseases and Pests** Published

*ARS Member discount and royalty applies when this book is purchased through the special landing page*

The *Compendium of Rhododendron and Azalea Diseases and Pests, Second Edition*, a new book by APS PRESS, is available for pre-order and expected to ship in July.

American Rhododendron Society members can purchase this new title at the discounted price of US \$79 through December 31, 2014, plus shipping and handling. This is \$20 off the regular \$99 list price.

The ARS will receive a 5% royalty from anyone who buys the book through this special APS PRESS landing page, which will also link from the ARS Store. The link to this landing page is at:

<http://www.apsnet.org/apsstore/shopapspress/promos/44365roy.aspx>

### About the Book

The *Compendium of Rhododendron and Azalea Diseases and Pests* is an encyclopedic reference that provides more than 170 images and a simple, easy-to-use format to help users quickly recognize and manage pest-related problems of these widely cultivated flowering shrubs and trees.

The *Compendium of Rhododendron and Azalea Diseases and Pests* is a useful resource for gardeners, commercial growers, consultants, and others who cultivate Rhododendron and Azalea plants.

Editors Robert G. Linderman and D. Michael Benson, both experts in their own right, selected top authorities on rhododendron and azalea plant diseases and insects to write this replacement to the popular first edition of this book, published back in 1986.

This comprehensive book is broken into four sections full of new and revised information, including:

- **Diseases Caused by Infectious Agents:** Addresses commonly occurring diseases caused by fungi, bacteria, viruses, higher plants, nematodes, and algae. A new section on virus diseases has been updated to include azalea ringspot disease, Rhododendron virus N, and Rhododendron virus A and related viruses.
- **Diseases Caused by Noninfectious Agents:** Discusses damage caused by moisture, heat, and cold stress, as well as mineral deficiencies and toxicities, air pollution, and pesticide phytotoxicities. A new section on noninfectious agents covers genetic abnormalities, including tissue proliferation and witches' broom.
- **Disease and Pest Management:** Provides a thorough discussion of management strategies, such as exclusion, eradication, quarantine, sanitation, irrigation water treatment, chemical control, host resistance, and cultural practices. A new section, called "Biology and Application of Beneficial Microbes", presents much of the latest thinking and research on a range of crops (not limited to rhododendron and azalea) and highlights new nonchemical approaches to disease and pest management.
- **Insect and Mite Pests:** Includes nearly 40 color photos and provides detailed treatments of the full range of pests that affect rhododendron and azalea. The section on pest management has been expanded and includes a table that identifies the insecticides and miticides used to manage these pests.

A new collection of color photos; a symptoms-based diagnostic guide; an updated index of common plant disease names; and a glossary of terms (including new terms not covered in the book's first edition) make this book even more accessible.

Order today to benefit your organization.

### Book Specifications and Data

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