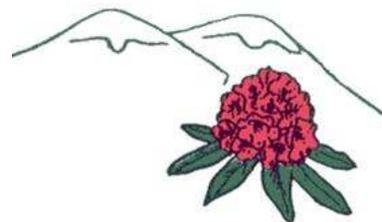


THE RHODOVINE



**THE MOUNT ARROWSMITH
RHODODENDRON SOCIETY**

**MARS
P. O. Box 342
Qualicum Beach. BC
V9K 1S8**

Volume 28, Issue 4

APRIL 2016

2015/2016 Executive

President

Linda Derkach
752-3545 lindaderkach@shaw.ca

Vice-President

Glen Jamieson
248-5593 glenj02@yahoo.ca

Treasurer

Ray Walker
248-5138 jrjiffy@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 darryl59ann@telus.net

Kathy Loyer
738-0138 kathyloyer@shaw.ca

Maria Bieberstein
468-7252 abieberstein@telus.net

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 – Glen Jamieson

PR - Marilyn Dawson

Refreshments

Sunshine – Maria Bieberstein

This Month:

Bill Dumont of the Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society

Gardens in South West England



The 'hot' garden at Coleton Fishacre Garden, Devon in August is brimming with late season bloomers in their orange, red and yellow finest.

Photos: Linda Derkach

MARS Meetings

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

Next Meeting:

**Thursday,
April 14**



Rosa 'Mermaid' scrambles over the old brick walls at Sissinghurst Castle Garden in Kent. This quintessential English garden was created by Vita Sackville-West and her husband Harold Nicholson. The revolutionary planting ideas have been used by gardeners everywhere.

Inside.....

Activities..... Page 2
Woodbury, NZ.....Page 3
Truss Show Rules.....Page 7
Events.....Page 9

Upcoming Programs...

❖ April 2016

- *Bill Dumont on Gardens in England*

❖ May 2016

- *Bernie Guyader on The Small Rhododendrons*

Dates to Remember...

❖ April 23, 2016

- *MARS Rhododendron Show and Sale*

❖ April 20 to 24, 2016

- *ARS Annual Convention Williamsburg, Virginia*

❖ May 7 & 8, 2016

- *MARS 25th Annual Mother's Day Garden Tour*

Deer Repellent

- 1 cup milk
- 1 tbsp of dish soap
- 1 egg
- 1 tbsp of cooking oil

Beat together and place in a large milk jug. Fill half full with water. Sit in the sun to brew. Can be used immediately and sprayed on tender plants. Does not wash off in the rain.

Gardens in South West England

Speaker: Bill Dumont

In the spring of 2015 the Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society hosted a 12 day tour of SW England Gardens, focussing on Cornwall where the climate and economy was ideal for establishing many historic and unique gardens, particularly during the Victorian era.

The tour began in London at Kew, with its very large botanic focus and visited more than a dozen fabulous gardens ending up at the world famous Chelsea Garden show back in London.

The group of 47 toured one of the world's oldest gardens at Oxford University established in the early 1600's and viewed a number of amazing Royal Horticultural Society sites such as Wisley and Rosemoor.

Bill Dumont, the tour leader and organiser is a professional forester and consultant, has been doing forestry and garden tours for more than three decades and will present the highlights of gardens and sites visited including learning experiences from participants on design and content.

He will also have information available on his upcoming trip of New Zealand gardens in the fall of 2016,

Woodbury Rhododendrons:

A Dazzling New Zealand Garden

Story and Photos: Linda Derkach

At Woodbury near Geraldine, South Canterbury on the South Island of NZ, Bernie and Joy O'Keefe reside in a tranquil garden with ponds and rhododendrons complemented by hardy perennials. Not satisfied with just the upkeep of this extensive garden, Joy and Bernie also sell rhododendrons that they have mostly propagated themselves in their nursery next door. Here are some of Joy and Bernie's rhododendrons blooming in October 2014.



Rhododendron 'Sweet Sixteen' was hybridized by Whitney in Washington State, and grows happily on Bainbridge Island and in New Zealand. Parentage is unknown.



This magnificent specimen is a hybrid of *Rhododendron griffithianum*.



Rhododendron 'Kiwi Magic' is a yak cross with 'Lem's Cameo' and 'Dido'. Hardy to -15 C., deep pink buds open to a soft pink with yellow centre, then transform to a soft yellow. The flower is frilly with a double calyx. It grows happily in many Vancouver Island gardens. R. 'Kiwi Magic' was hybridized in Christchurch, NZ.



Rhododendron 'Plum Duff' is a lovely hybrid with a mysterious past. While it grows beautifully at Woodbury Garden and is sold in the Blue Mountain Nursery, West Otago, New Zealand, a search of the internet produced very little information about this very pretty cultivar.



Rhododendron 'Coral Skies' - hybridized by Lofthouse (Vancouver, BC)



Rhododendron 'Holmeslee Pearl' caught my eye – lots of blooms on a compact plant hybridized by Holmes of NZ. Pink buds open to a very pale pink aging to white. Very little can be found on this plant that is a cross of VanNes 'Sensation' and unknown.



Rhododendron 'Irresistible Impulse' is grown around the world or at least in NZ and Vancouver Island. Large red/purple trusses cover this handsome plant. This offspring appears to be even more spectacular than its parents - 'Mars' and 'Purple Splendour'.



The aptly named *Rhododendron* 'Cockatoo' is an attention-seeking Knap Hill azalea grown at Woodbury and around the world.

In his Knap Hill Azalea website, Don Hyatt - ARS Gold Medal Winner and azalea aficionado - sings their praises:

"When I was only about 5 or 6 years old, my parents took me to see the famous azalea collection at the National Arboretum. Located in a valley near the display of evergreen Glen Dale azalea hybrids on Mount Hamilton was a planting of rare and beautiful deciduous azaleas which had been given to the United States by the appreciative Dutch government, after the end of World War II. There were probably some older Mollis and Ghent hybrids in the collection, but I remember most of all the spectacular Knap Hill and Exbury azalea hybrids which were so spectacular.

The Knap Hill hybrid azaleas were developed by Anthony Waterer at the Knap Hill Nursery in England near the turn of the century. The Exbury azaleas, derived from the Knap Hills, were developed by Lionel de Rothschild at the Exbury Estate in England. Both of these beautiful azalea hybrid groups as well as their descendants are now

generally referred to as Knap Hill hybrids in honor of the original hybridizing program.”

Like Don Hyatt, I am a devoted fan of these spectacular hybrid azaleas that can bring such amazing colour and fragrance to the garden, followed by spectacular autumn foliage.

The test fields at Woodbury are brimming with rhododendrons - some of which are propagated from seed that is the result of hybridization by friends and colleagues. Some hard frosts through the winter ensure that their plants are hardy. Here are some of the unnamed and unknown hybrids residing at Woodbury.



An unknown Loderi hybrid...



A real show-stopper...



Clearly, many fine pinks and corals reside in Woodbury Gardens, ranging from old hybrids, unknown hybrids, species and rhododendrons that are popular no matter what part of the world one resides.

How To Plant a Rhododendron

Linda Derkach and Joan Rich

First and most importantly, rhododendrons need good drainage. They do not like to dry out and they don't like their feet wet. **Moist, well-drained soil is the key.**

Do Your Research

Doing some research on your particular species or hybrid will help you be successful. Check for issues such as sun tolerance, drainage needs, hardiness and ultimate size. Some species are best planted above the ground in a very friable planting medium like bark mulch. Some rhododendron experts advocate planting right on top of your soil and mounding soil/bark mulch around the plant. At the very least, do not plant your rhododendron lower than the surrounding soil. Plant on a slight hill if possible to enhance drainage. Some rhododendrons need more shade than others, and some can tolerate quite a lot of sun. Plants need some sun in order to set bud and bloom the following spring. Most are happiest with protection from the hot afternoon sun. Knowing the needs of your particular rhododendron will assist you in choosing the best site for success.

The Best Soil

Once you have chosen the site for your rhododendron, you need to check out the soil. Heavy clay soils and thin, sandy soils will not work...rhododendron death will likely follow. Check your soil deep down to ensure that it will hold the moisture but not keep the roots wet. You can amend your soil with bark mulch, sea soil or compost. If you have not grown rhododendrons in your garden before, check out the pH of your soil. Rhododendrons need a pH of 4.5 to 5.8. (A pH metre is available for loan from MARS.)

The Planting Process

Once you have the best position and growing medium, remove your plant carefully from the

pot. If the soil is moist and the plant is not pot-bound, rough up the roots at the edges a bit, spread the roots gently and plant. If the plant is dry, re-wet prior to planting. If the plant is pot-bound and the roots are quite matted, rough up and tease the roots all around the perimeter. In other words, give your plant the best chance for success by releasing the roots so they can move out into the soil. A pot-bound plant that is plopped in the ground as-is will struggle to survive. The roots need help to start moving into the surrounding soil. For a larger, 4 or 5 gallon containerized plant that is severely pot-bound, you may need to take drastic action and cut an "x" at the bottom of the mass with a knife. Here's a website that shows you how to do this:

www.murcottgarden.com

Click on [Talks and Articles](#) and then click on [Planting a Containerised Rhododendron](#)

Plant your rhododendron higher than the surrounding soil. Put water in the hole first and let it drain so the soil is just moist. If it does not drain fairly quickly, this is not a good sign. (More work is needed before you can plant here.) Settle the soil around your plant in with your hand – do not tramp in with your foot. Water in well, and if you are planting on a slope, build a little well or berm so that the water doesn't just run down the hill and miss the roots. Be sure there is water nearby so you can water when needed. Remember – moist, well-drained soil at all times and no wet feet!

Mulch, Mulch, Mulch

And finally – mulch your plant all around the drip line with bark mulch or pine needles. Do not pile the mulch up against the trunk of the plant. Two to four inches of mulch after watering will help keep the roots cool and moist – and help conserve water. This is especially important for the hot, dry summer ahead!!

Rhododendron Show and Sale

Saturday, April 23, 2016

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 (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 please. For example, *R. macabeanum* could be entered in the species category and the appropriate color category, but not twice in the same 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 cross-breeding 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 each truss
- Entries will be accepted from 7 am to 8.30 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 and Protected (such as *madenii* and *vireyas* that need winter protection here).

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 labelled.

All trusses must be in place by 8:30 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.

From Your President...

Lovely April has arrived, and with it even more blooms than our very floriferous March! Rhododendrons seem to be a little confused about when they should bloom – some are much earlier than last year while others are about the same. Most of mine are just covered with blooms – or have very few or none – a consequence perhaps of too little water last summer.

But whatever happens is out of our control – we can only wait patiently and hope that there are plenty of blooms for April 23 and May 7 and 8!!

A 'maiden' blooming for me this year is *Rhododendron* 'Ruth Lyons' and *R.* 'Razorbill'. Both have been in my garden for a few years, and have now decided to give me a thrill!



Rhododendron 'Ruth Lyons'



Rhododendron 'Razorbill' - a Cox hybrid

Enjoy April in your garden – sun or rain or wind!
And hope to see you at a plant sale or on a garden tour.
Best Wishes, Linda

Mt. Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society

General Meeting

Held at Qualicum Beach Civic Centre

March 2, 2016 at 7:30 pm

Minutes

Refreshments: Provided by many members

Raffle prizes included: *Rhododendron* 'Wild Ginger', *R.* 'Ken Janeck' and *R.* 'Cilpinense'.

Winners were Tony Ansdell, Kathy Loyer, Linda Renwick and Eddie Liedke.

About 75 stalwart souls turned out on a nasty night to hear Nancy Turner give a presentation on Culturally Important Plants on Vancouver Island. Glen Jamieson introduced the University of Victoria professor as a renowned ethnobotanist who has worked for years with First Nations elders and is the author of several books. Before she began her address, she paid tribute to the First Nation people who shared their knowledge and acknowledged Qualicum Beach as part of their traditional territory.

Her talk touched on a number of native plants that are generally overlooked in modern landscaping such as: soapberry, oceanspray, *Rosa nutkana*, pacific crabapple and the nodding onion, backing up her comments with a generous supply of photos.

A very short business meeting followed the break. Rather than a sign-up sheet for attendance, everyone was given a raffle ticket for the door prize as they entered; raffle prizes were sold at the usual price. Those who were non-members paid \$5 at the door including one couple who drove from Sayward to hear "someone they had admired for years."

1. **Garden Tour** chair, Kathy Loyer said 14 gardens will be on the Mothers' Day Garden Tour and lots of sitters are needed. Nicola Lupton was on hand to do the sign-up and Linda Derkach encouraged those non-members in the audience to sit, offering a free tour ticket to all who

volunteer to sit in a garden. The two-day event is the 25th tour and several value-added items are planned including art, music and floral art displays in some gardens.

2. In the absence of Ray Walker, chair for the **Rhododendron Show and Sale**, Marilyn Dawson reminded members that the show will have a MARS table again, selling rhododendrons and companion plants. She encouraged members to pot up good-looking plants and bring them to the show.
3. Linda told the group that the **Salt Spring Bus trip** is on May 19 but must leave very early in the morning because later ferry sailings have dangerous cargo. She asked how many were willing to be at the Civic Centre early so the bus could leave at 7 am. About 26 people raised their hands. More details will come later.

Joanne Hamilton brought several floral displays to decorate the hall and some members brought flowering rhododendrons to show what can be blooming at this time of year. **Meeting adjourned: 9:40**

ARS Williamsburg 2016



**A Joint Meeting of the
American Rhododendron Society
and the *Azalea Society of America*
April 20-24, 2016**

Eaglecrest Garden Club

Plant Sale

Saturday, April 23, 2016
531 Yambury Road, QB
8:00 am to 12 noon

**Perennials, shrubs, annuals, herbs,
vegetable starters, succulents, etc.**

Master Gardeners on Site



Mid Island Floral Art Club

Thursday, April 14 at 1:45 pm
Stephens United Church Hall
150 Village Way, Qualicum Beach

Demonstration:

Have a Go at Art in Bloom

Nanoose Bay Catspan Society Plant Sale/Garage Sale

Saturday, April 30, 9-3
482 Bayview Terrrace
Qualicum Beach

Lots of **veggie seedlings**
and potted **perennials**

Garage Sale items (many garden
related) are mostly \$2.00

***All profits are used to spay/neuter
feral cats, and to vet check and
re-home stray/abandoned cats,
and cats that need a new home.***

Eaglecrest/Oceanside Garden Club

Presents

Connie's Dahlias

Speaker: Connie Thompson
Head Gardener at Connie's Dahlias
in Nanoose Bay will share her
growing secrets and techniques.

Qualicum Beach Civic Centre
Wednesday, April 20, 2016

7:00 pm

Non-members: \$3.00

Blooming Now....



Rhododendron 'Ilam Violet'

Mt Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society Presents

***Rhododendron Show
& Plant Sale***

Saturday, April 23

10 am to 2 pm

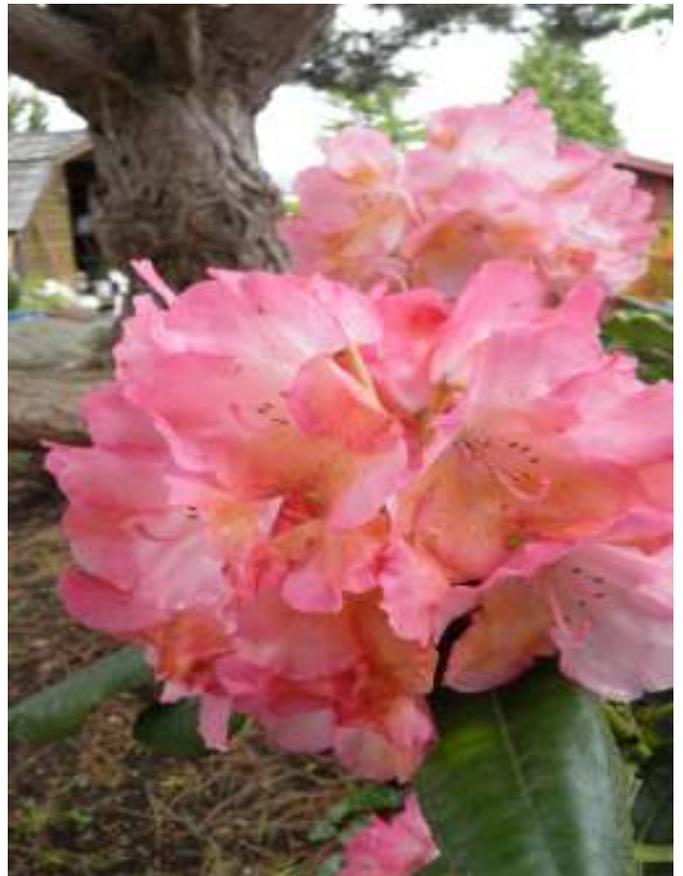
Parksville Curling Rink

(Hwy 19A at Corfield)

Admission FREE

***Come for the blooms, stay for
coffee, snacks and door prizes***

***Shop the vendors for
rhododendrons, perennials
and talk to the experts***



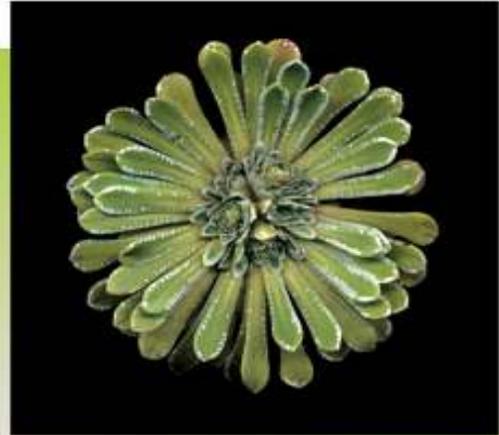
More Info: marsrhodos.ca

250-752-3694



welcome

Malcolm McGregor
Saxifrage expert & author, from the U.K.,
To speak on "A World Full of Saxifrages"



(L: *Saxifraga oppositifolia* in Yorkshire, R: Hunting saxifrages at Ankogel, Austria.)

Monday, April 25th, 2016, 1-3 p.m.
(doors open 12:30),
QUALICUM BEACH CIVIC CENTRE,
747 JONES, Q.B.
\$5 at door includes coffee/tea & goody.
Plant prize draw tickets \$3.

Malcolm will present a spectacular survey of the world of saxifrages from geological times to the present day in the wild and the garden.

He is the author of *Saxifrages* (2008, Timber Press) and has been growing alpine plants for 35 years and has been a professional lecturer for over thirty years. He has travelled widely, particularly in the last fifteen years, in Europe and North America, as well as visiting Turkey, Morocco, Western Australia, the Himalayas, and Far Eastern Asia.

Info? Valerie: 250-594-4423 or
Melanson.valerie@gmail.com

