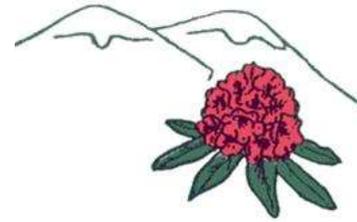


THE RHODOVINE



**THE MOUNT ARROWSMITH
RHODODENDRON SOCIETY**

MARS
P. O. Box 342
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Garden Tour – Sherry Thompson

Truss Show – Kathy & Guy Loyer

Greeter – Guy Loyer

Library – Donna de Boer

Meeting Coordinator-Tony Ansdell

Membership – Tony Ansdell

Milner Gardens - John England

Plant Prizes – Sherry Thompson

Program Chair – Glen Jamieson

Propagation – Sherry Thompson

PR - Marilyn Dawson

Refreshments –

Goodies – Jane Walker

Species Garden – Tony Ansdell

Sunshine – Judy Wood

Webmaster – Diane Henders

Welcome – Joanne Hamilton

**This Month:
Special Movie
Presentation...**

The Gardener



**The garden of Frank
Cabot is our treat
for winter-weary
gardeners!**

Photo: IMDb, *The Gardener*

MARS Website
**Check out our updated and
exciting renewed website
at marsrhodos.ca**

MARS Meetings

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

Next Meeting:

**Wednesday,
February 13, 2019**



It won't be long before hellebores emerge to accompany our rhododendrons. *Helleborus* 'Ivory Prince' is one of my favourites, along with *Helleborus* 'Pink Frost' which produces multiple blossoms on each stem.

Inside...

| | |
|------------------------------|--------|
| Activities | Page 2 |
| Seedy Saturday..... | Page 3 |
| Minutes | Page 4 |
| Mysterious World | Page 5 |
| Spring Events Calendar | Page 7 |
| Danish Garden..... | Page 8 |

Upcoming Programs

❖ Wednesday, February 13

- **Special Movie Presentation:**
The Gardener
[htgtps://vimeo.com/240237260](https://vimeo.com/240237260)
Check it out – you will want to see this!

❖ Wednesday, March 13

- **Ole Jonny Larsen of Norway**
Plant Hunting: The Experience of an Amateur

❖ Wednesday, April 10

- **Circle of Knowledge**



Helleborus 'Pink Frost' smothers itself with buds and blossoms, facing upwards, impervious to the late winter weather.

Membership Renewal

If you have not already renewed your membership in MARS, you can renew by going on line at marsrhodos.ca

and clicking on the Membership page.

Or mail your cheque to:

Membership, Mount Arrowsmith

Rhododendron Society

PO BOX 342

Qualicum Beach, BC V9K 1S8.

The Gardener

A Special Movie Presentation

Editor's Note: Normally MARS has a speaker, but when the opportunity to view this movie presented itself, we jumped at the chance. Most of us will never have a chance to visit this amazing garden in person – so here it is in all its breathtaking glory for us to enjoy together.

Quebec is known as La Belle Province....and this movie certainly supports that claim. Nestled in the rolling hills of the Charlevoix region of Quebec, *Les Jardins de Quatre-Vents* is one of the world's foremost private gardens.



A horticultural masterpiece, it is a place of beauty and surprise with riotous blossoms, lakes, streams, bridges. An English-style garden, it is the work of three generations of the Cabot family and the summer estate of Frank Cabot who guides us through his treasured garden.

The documentary was awarded the Prix du Public at the 2016 Quebec City Film Festival. You will be very glad that you braved a wintery February evening to take in the beauty of this Canadian, award-winning garden.

Seedy Saturday

Volunteers Needed

From Marilyn Dawson

If you haven't already offered, don't forget that MARS will need volunteers for its table at Seedy Saturday on February 2. Shifts are fairly flexible, usually one or two hours from 10 am until 3:30. A 2-hour shift usually allows time to check out the hall. We will be selling a few plants; they are usually mostly rhododendrons, with a few companion plants as well.

The job is fairly simple. Hand out **Dates to Remember**, our guide to the **Rhododendron Show and Sale** in April and the **MARS Garden Tour** in May and sell plants. It's a good idea to know the date of the next MARS meeting and the speaker; that's always asked.

The most important asset for a volunteer in this instance is a ready smile. You don't have to be an expert; a knowledgeable person is often within reach if the question is more than one volunteer can handle. It helps to know a little about MARS and meetings; the MARS web site has lots of information.

www.marsrhodos.ca

To volunteer or donate a plant, contact Marilyn Dawson at dawsom@shaw.ca or 250-752-3694. And pray for good weather!

Early Spring Bloomers...



Eranthis hyemalis (Winter Aconite) is one of the cheeriest early spring flowers. This patch in Duncan has been growing and spreading for years. A member of the Ranunculaceae family, the leaves resemble buttercups – but don't be fooled. This is a gem blooming in February.



Without fail every year this *Hepatica nobilis* blooms in February in a shallow container and is no work at all.

Do you have a Facebook Account?

Then you will enjoy checking out the

MARS Facebook page

managed so ably by

Rose Prufer

Mt Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society

General Meeting

Held at the QB Civic Centre

January 9, 2019 at 7:30 pm

President Glen Jamieson put the chapter's business first on the agenda in a departure from regular practice. He explained that with the inclement weather members from Port Alberni had not arrived and consequently raffle tickets were not at hand. A communications failure. Not to worry, the door prize was drawn first and those chips were then re-used for the raffle. *R. 'Hallelujah'*, the door prize was won by Liz Cullen.

A short educational presentation on mulch and root function followed.

Secretary: Marilyn Dawson said she will need a few volunteers for Seedy Saturday on Feb. 2. Shifts are generally two hours in length from about 9 to 3.

Rhododendron Show and Sale: Co-Chair Guy Loyer said 8 vendors are already confirmed for the April 20 event. Rose Prufer urged members to pot up plants as soon as possible so they have time to get established before the sale. Now is a good time to divide perennials if the ground is not frozen. The MARS table is important to the sale because while MARS gets 20% from vendor-sold plants, it gets 100% from the chapter's table.

Garden Tour: Sherry Thompson said the gardens have been selected and asked members to think of volunteering as a sitter for the Mother's Day weekend event. She also urged anyone interested to volunteer for future garden committees.

Membership: Tony Ansdell reported that the chapter has had an increase of more new members than previous years, possibly because of chapter events such as the mini-conference last fall. He said only about a third of members have not returned the privacy policy information required of every member. He will be following up in the next few weeks.

Greig Species Garden: Tony reported a work party in November provided a fresh layer of mulch and added more fencing. A new work bee is expected to be active later this month. The plant selection committee will be travelling to the RSF in Federal Way, Wa. in search of mature plants on their wish list.

Website: Tony said Diane Henders has been very active updating the MARS website, particularly enhancing the Truss Show page and preparing the 2019 site. Rose Prufer and Diane were praised for their work on Facebook and the MARS website respectively.

Propagation: Sherry has heard from Ken Webb that the cuttings taken to his unit late fall are doing better than those in the previous year. These cuttings will provide plants for 2019 table favors and/or future plants sales and raffles.

ARS 2019 Conference: Steering Committee Chair Linda Derkach reminded members of the upcoming conference in Parksville Sept. 27-29 and urged them to think of volunteer opportunities, little and big. The conference includes speakers, workshops and an afternoon of garden tours as well as banquets on Friday and Saturday nights. A silent auction and photo contest are also in the works.

Bus Tour: Linda said the bus tour this year is on June 18 and will be a long, one-day affair to take in gardens from Duncan to Victoria. More details in March.

Other Business: 1. Members were given a heads-up about the February meeting when an award-winning documentary *The Gardener* will be presented. The garden of horticulturist Frank Cabot is in Quebec.
2. Joanne Hamilton, who will be preparing table centrepieces for the 2019 conference with Floral Arts members, urged members to think of late bloomers, dahlias, hydrangeas, colourful foliage and be prepared to decorate the Parksville Centre, not just the tables.
3. Coffee treats were provided by Linda Renwick, Diane Henders and Joanne Hamilton.
4. Draw prizes were: *R. 'Patty Bee'*, *R. 'Cilpinense'*, *R. 'Teddy Bear'* and *Sarcococca ruscifolia* (Sweet Box). Winners were: Ray Walker, Dawn House, Gus Thompson and Liz Campbell.

Program: After the break, Glen gave a presentation that is becoming popular on the first meeting of the New Year, photos from members' gardens. This year the emphasis was on rhododendrons, and their great variety, but members also included other interesting garden and holiday shots, including a very relaxed tiger.

Meeting Adjourned: 9:40 pm

Page 4

The Mysterious Underworld Beneath Our Rhododendrons

*Notes from the presentation by Glen Jamieson
at our January meeting.*

Mulch

- Have you ever gently pulled the mulch away and looked at what is found under it?
- What you will see in order are fine white threads, then thin fibrous roots and lower down, thicker, woodier roots, all forming a complicated web-like network? The fine white threads are not roots but are instead mycorrhizal fungi.

Root Function

- Plant roots have a number of functions:
 - They anchor and stabilize the plant in the ground
 - They store food
 - They produce plant growth substances, and
 - They take up water and minerals for growth.

Transport

- Roots represent the beginning of a plant's internal transport system, which functions like our circulatory system.
- However, without a heart, transport is passive and is determined by the gradient in hydrostatic pressure between the soil and the atmosphere.
- Roots radiate outward from the base of the stem, colonizing the soil in their quest for nutrients and water.
- Some plants have rhizomes - underground stems - that intertwine with roots and provide hidden growth points for new stems and roots.
- Thus, some clusters of plants, such as with goldenrod and poplars, are simply clones of an individual plant!

Root Spread

- While we generally protect the soil between the stem and a plant's drip line (the outer edge of its branches), plant roots actually often extend two to three times this distance.
- This far-reaching system is mostly made up of thin fibrous roots that are often difficult to see!
- Thin fibrous root growth is opportunistic in its search for water and nutrients, and if they don't encounter a needed resource after a certain amount of growth, they will typically die back to a larger root.
- The fibrous roots that survive this exploratory phase will gradually thicken and harden, becoming permanent storage organs and part of the water transport system.
- In the winter in mild, wet areas like ours, fine roots will grow up into the mulch to utilise the oxygen and nutrients there, but as this layer dries out in the summer, these roots will die back to areas moist enough to support growth.
- Thus, while the top of the plant may be dormant, root growth here can occur all year round!
- Seedlings start with a small taproot, but for many species, this quickly becomes absorbed and incorporated into a relatively shallow, laterally spreading root system.
- This is because roots need oxygen to survive, and so their growth is limited to areas that are aerated.
- The soil in walking paths can become quite compacted, which is why root growth there is often limited.
- The more compact the soil, the shallower a root system will be. In highly aerated soil, like sand, the limited factor then becomes water availability!
- Amending soil when planting (by adding peat, etc.) is not recommended by Linda Chalker-Scott, as where the amended soil meets the area's natural soil, a discontinuity will occur that slows down air and water movement.
- Plant roots have to struggle to cross this discontinuity, which for some plants such as woody plants like rhododendrons can inhibit their growth.
- She thus recommends using high organic matter only as a mulch, and not as a soil additive when planting.

- This also applies when potting plants, and the soil mixture should be the same throughout the pot (i.e., no special drainage material like gravel or styrofoam pellets on the bottom). This is because water does not move easily from layers of fine textured materials to layers of more coarsely textured.
- Gravitational water will not move from a fine soil texture into a coarser material until the finer soil is saturated. Since the stated goal for using coarse material in the bottoms of containers is to "keep soil from getting water logged, it is ironic that adding this material will induce the very state it is intended to prevent.

2019 Winter, Spring and Fall Events and Activities

| Date & Time | Event | Location |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Tuesday, January 15 7:30 pm | North Island Rhododendron Society – Five members will give short presentations on garden-related topics | United Church 250 Beach Drive Comox |
| Saturday, February 2 | Qualicum Beach Seedy Saturday | QB Civic Centre |
| Wednesday, February 13 7:30 pm | MARS – Special Movie Presentation of <i>The Gardener</i> | QB Civic Centre |
| Wednesday, March 13 7:30 pm | MARS – Ole Jonny Larsen of Norway on <i>Plant Hunting: The Experience of an Amateur</i> | QB Civic Centre |
| Thursday, February 14 2:00 pm | Mid Island Floral Art Club February Meeting | St. Stephen's United Church 150 Village Way |
| Saturday, April 20 10 am to 2 pm | MARS Rhododendron Show and Sale | Parksville Curling Club |
| Saturday, May 11 Sunday, May 12 10 to 4 each day | MARS Mother's Day Weekend Garden Tour | Qualicum Beach Parksville |
| May 15 to 18 | American Rhododendron Society Spring Convention | Philadelphia |
| Tuesday, June 18 | MARS Bus Tour | Victoria |
| Friday, September 27 to Sunday, September 29, 2019 | ARS Fall Conference Hosted by Mt. Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society <i>Rhododendrons by the Seaside</i> | Parksville Community and Conference Centre |

Lulu's Garden ... near Copenhagen, Denmark

Page 8

Words and Photos: Linda Derkach

The ARS Convention in 2018 afforded many of us the opportunity to visit exceptional private and public gardens in Europe.

Lulu's garden near Copenhagen was informal, natural and calming. It was difficult to leave this little bit of paradise.



*Taking advantage of the natural beauty of the setting,
Lulu created a meandering path around the lake.*



The view from the house begins with this sweeping lawn to the lake.



A stroll around the lake revealed a surprise around every turn - rhododendrons clearly content in this natural setting.



A delicious unnamed purple, and nearby *Rhododendron quinquefolium* in full bloom.







Lulu's natural setting with mostly deciduous trees provided just enough light for the rhododendrons to produce heavenly blooms.





Rhododendron yakushimanum 'Koichiro Wada'

Almost every garden we visited in Denmark and Sweden had at least one of these exquisite beauties - and often two or three. And all were healthy and free of root weevil damage!