

THE RHODOVINE



**THE MOUNT ARROWSMITH
RHODODENDRON SOCIETY**

MARS
P. O. Box 342
Qualicum Beach, BC
V9K 1S8
www.marsrhodos.ca

Volume 31, Issue 8

OCTOBER 2020

2019/2020 Executive

President

Glen Jamieson
248-5593 glenj02@yahoo.ca

Vice-President

Kathy Loyer
738-0138 kathyloyer@telus.net

Treasurer

Ray Walker
248-5138 irjiffy@shaw.ca

Secretary

Marilyn Dawson
752-3694 dawsom@shaw.ca

Directors

Tony Ansdell
752-4475 ansdella@shaw.ca

Linda Derkach
752-3545 lindaderkach@shaw.ca

Dawn House
738-2933 dl.house@telus.net

Rose Prufer
738-2393 ramapo@telus.net

David Landry
947-5828 david.landry@shaw.ca

Guy Loyer
738-0138 guyloyer@gmail.com

Lars Stefanyk
923-0939 lestefanyk@outlook.com

Dollar Table – Barbara Kulla

Newsletter Editor - Linda Derkach

Garden Tour –

Truss Show – Kathy & Guy Loyer

Greeter – Guy Loyer

Meeting Coordinator-Tony Ansdell

Membership – Tony Ansdell

Plant Prizes – Sherry Thompson

Program Chair – Glen Jamieson

Propagation – Sherry Thompson

PR - Marilyn Dawson

Goodies – Jane Walker

Species Garden – Tony Ansdell

Sunshine – Judy Wood

Webmaster – Diane Henders

Welcome – Joanne Hamilton

October Meeting

**Wednesday, October 14
at 7:30 pm**

**Botanizing in Yunnan
with Glen Jamieson**

In person and via Zoom

**Limit of 25 people in
person at the QBCC**

**To attend in person you
must register with
Marilyn Dawson
dawsom@shaw.ca**

Everyone else:

**You will receive a Link to
Zoom the day before with
instructions.**

More information inside...

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

MARS Meetings

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

Next Meeting:

October 14

**25 Members in Person
Others via Zoom**



Fuchsia magellanica (Hardy Fuchsia) is still blooming in October and a favourite of the Anna's Hummingbirds overwintering in our island gardens.

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ARS Bronze Medal for Jane and Ray Walker

Parkville Community Park was the location for our Annual General Meeting where Jane and Ray Walker were honoured with the ARS Bronze Medal. Covid rules necessitated the wearing of masks.



Jane and Ray accept the ARS Bronze Medal Award from President Glen Jamieson – safely masked....

The citation reads as follows:

Mount Arrowsmith is pleased to present the Bronze Medal to Jane and Ray Walker in recognition of their contribution to MARS over many years. Ray and Jane are known as great hosts of the annual Christmas Party, their home so alive with lights and laughter, but they are so much more. Ray has been director, then treasurer, a post he still holds. He has chaired the Rhododendron Show and

Sale twice, assisted at every sale, organizing cashiers and doing other necessary chores. Jane has served as Director, helped out at MARS events and organized treats for the social break. Most recently with Ray, she helped to operate the coffee service at monthly meetings. It is with great pleasure we recognize such service to MARS with the chapter's highest honor, the Bronze Medal.

And here are the unmasked Jane and Ray at one of the many MARS Christmas parties they have hosted.



Ray says – that while we probably cannot have a Christmas party this year, their Christmas lights will go up as usual and he invites us all to drive by and enjoy!!

MARS October Meeting

via Zoom and In Person

We have planned a two-fold meeting on our normal MARS night ...

Wednesday, October 14

at 7:30 pm

In person at the Qualicum Beach Civic Centre for 25 members registered before the meeting with Marilyn at dawsom@shaw.ca

and via **Zoom** for all others.

We will hold a meeting for up to 25 people in the hall, practicing social distancing and with no food, to hear a presentation by Glen on his 2005 trip to Yunnan, China, using the projector and big screen.

Participants, preferably those who cannot use Zoom, would register with Marilyn at dawsom@shaw.ca at least a day ahead of time, on a first come basis. **We cannot exceed 25 people**, as the centre cannot hold more than 50 and a photography group also is meeting there at the same time.

We are also planning on simultaneously broadcasting the presentation via Zoom for everyone else.

This is a trial procedure, since we have not done this before, and don't really know how it will work out technically, and how it will be received by MARS members.

Prior to the meeting and Zoom call, you will have to download the App on to your computer, iPad, etc., and as host, Glen will mute you so you will not be able to actively participate during the presentation.

We will also try recording the presentation, so it can hopefully be viewed at a later date if that night is not convenient for you to attend.

We will send out the Zoom login information to all MARS members a day or two beforehand so you will know how to connect with the presentation that will start shortly after 7:30 pm.

There will be no MARS business conducted at the meeting.

We hope most MARS members will participate using one of these two approaches.

Let's hope it is a success.

MARS Membership Renewal Time

It is time for us to attend to the annual renewal of our membership in MARS and ARS.

As usual, the cost is \$30 and we need to have payment by December 1.

Here are the ways to pay:

At a meeting...

- Assuming we may have some meetings, you can pay me, in cash or cheque, at a meeting.
- If paying in cash, please make sure I register your name.
- Please make your cheque is made payable to "MARS".

Mail a cheque...

You can pay by cheque by mailing to:

**MARS
PO Box 342
Qualicum Beach BC V9K 1S8**

E-Transfer...

- You can pay using e-Transfer to treasurer@marsrhodos.ca
- You will be asked to choose a question and provide the answer.
- Please use "What is this for" as the question and provide an obvious answer.

Drop it off...

- If you find it more convenient, you can put the cheque or money in an envelope and put into the mailbox by my front door at:

**441 Seacrest Place
Qualicum Beach, BC
V9K 1E8**

- Again, if it is cash, make sure your name is identified clearly.

Many thanks from

Tony Ansdell,

MARS Membership Chair

Greig Species Rhododendron Garden at Milner Gardens...

Marilyn Dawson

Just before the pandemic shut down all public gatherings, MARS members approved donating \$5,000 in the name of all District One Chapters to the Greig Species Rhododendron Garden at Milner Gardens and Woodland. This was part of the proceeds from the 2019 Fall Regional Conference held in Parksville. Almost immediately Milner shut down.

But recently with the garden partially open to the public, Linda Derkach, chair of the Fall Conference presented the cheque to Milner Executive Director Geoff Ball at a gathering of chapter presidents. The funds are earmarked for long-time care of the garden's rhododendrons.



Chapter Presidents look on as Linda Derkach presents cheque to Geoff Ball .

Now that the weather has taken a fall-like turn, it's time to prepare the garden for winter. It's still a work in progress. A work bee is planned for October 16 from

9 am to mid-afternoon, a little longer than usual but there is much to be done, toting mulch, raking it in and doing some planting.

Newer members may not be aware that the history of the MARS-Milner relationship is almost as old as the chapter itself. Veronica Milner was an early supporter and the garden was on one of the first MARS Garden Tours in the early 1990s. As well, Jim Greig, the son of Ted and Mary Greig for whom the garden is named, was a very active member of MARS and Nanaimo RS along with his wife Jean. So, it is not surprising that when the garden was acquired by Vancouver Island University members hoped to continue that relationship. A species garden was a whispered dream that did come true. Eventually.

It took a bit of doing. Milner had lots of initial expenses to make it public-ready. There was the financial downturn of 2008-09 to contend with among other problems. But eventually, the stars aligned and the idea of a species garden was reborn as an ARS District One project with all seven chapters forming a partnership with VIU and Milner.

There was much to be done before the first plants went in the ground in late 2016; funds to be raised by all parties, the site chosen and cleared, architectural plans drawn. During this process, a dedicated group from all the island chapters contributed funds, advice and a lot of hours, not only in the planning process with their partners but also in sweat equity.

They raked tons of mulch, moved huge rhododendrons, planted sometimes in the rain. Because of all their work, a great many members, particularly from Nanaimo RS and MARS have a close attachment to the garden, rejoicing as the plants mature, like proud parents watching their offspring grow.



Rhododendron nerifolium about to bloom in the Greig Species Rhododendron Garden. Fellow Marsian Val Melanson took this photo during a recent visit to the garden.

Since it opened officially two years ago, a work crew from the island chapters has turned out when asked to mulch, plant and do whatever is needed. But illness, work or age-related problems are creating dwindling numbers. For a few weeks this summer, four to five

members helped get the garden in shape before it re-opened to the public but it is the same people every week.

MARS needs new volunteers to add to the Milner crew to spread the work around. Some jobs require more hands on deck.

During the pandemic, all work is carried out under COVID rules.

The next work bee will be on
**Friday, October 16 from
9 am to mid-afternoon.**

To join the crew contact Marilyn Dawson at dawsom@shaw.ca or 250-752-3694.

It's not a glamorous task but it's a good way to meet fellow gardeners and socialize while you work. Crew members are usually informed a week ahead of time and are not expected to appear for every call. Life does get in the way sometimes.

Reminder:

**Volunteers needed
Friday, October 16
from 9:00 am to
mid-afternoon**

Contact: Marilyn Dawson at

dawsom@shaw.ca

or

250-752-3694

Looking Back...

The ARS 2019 Fall Conference in Parksville created by the Members of MARS

Amazing that it is already a year since we mounted a very successful conference in Parksville.

Here are some memorable moments... from last September...pre-pandemic...



Members of the Mid Island Floral Art Club contributed greatly to the success of our conference by creating outstanding table centrepieces and floral arrangements...



We filled the Seaside Auditorium with friends near and far...



Toured beautiful fall gardens...



Enjoyed scrumptious meals...

And now that many groups cannot meet as we normally do, the Floral Art Club continues to create amazing arrangements with summer and fall bloomers, sharing them on the internet. Here are just a few...



Lilies and Driftwood



Hydrangea and Santolina (?)



Allium and Cosmos



Roses and Foxgloves



Clematis at the Front Door

Thanks to members of the Mid Island Floral Art Club for photos of their lovely arrangements!

**Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society
Annual General Meeting**

*Held at the Parksville Community Park
Picnic Shelter*

Wednesday September 23, 2020 at 2:00 pm

31 souls braved a nasty weather forecast to attend. It was a masked gathering for the express purpose of approving MARS financial statements of the past year. The AGM is usually held in May, but the pandemic had forced the closure of all public meetings at that time. Treasurer Ray Walker told the group that despite the prolonged layoff and no fund-raisers this year the chapter was in good financial condition.

Moved by Karen Bennett and seconded by Dave Landry that the Financial Statements to June 30, 202 be approved as previously circulated. *Carried unanimously.*

The slate of Officers and Directors will remain the same, having one more year to serve.

Presentation: Usually MARS makes awards honoring hard working members at the summer windup, but this year it was cancelled due to COVID-19.

MARS took this opportunity to present the ARS Bronze Medal to Ray and Jane Walker for their multi-faceted contribution over many years.

The rest of the meeting was devoted to the future:

- How to keep members involved in what is expected to be a challenging year
 - How to deliver talks when public gatherings are limited to a small number
- Plans are already under way to have Steve Hootman of the Rhododendron Species Foundation in Federal Way, Wash. speak in

November, possibly to a number of chapters via Zoom. The October meeting is scheduled for its usual slot although limited in size. More details will come later.

Propagation: Milner Gardens and Woodland has offered space in the nursery area this winter to hold MARS cuttings taken last fall. Most will be in one-litre pots and will be transported there sometime in October. Both Nanaimo and MARS have requested propagation space again this year in VIU's greenhouse and are waiting for the go-ahead from the university before making plans to take cuttings

Species Garden: Tony Ansdell gave a short breakdown of work at the Greig Species Garden at Milner, which had been closed to everyone since mid-March until a few weeks ago. Volunteers from Nanaimo and MARS were allowed in then under strict COVID protocols to help with the weeding before the garden opened to the public in a limited way. Many thanks to John Deniseger, June Bouchard and Chris Southwick from NRS, Guy Loyer, Doug Kitts, Glen Jamieson and Marilyn Dawson from MARS. Members were asked to consider volunteering to help; the work crew meets occasionally through the year and will be active again sometime in October. To volunteer email Marilyn Dawson at dawsom@shaw.ca

Membership: Tony is taking membership fees for the current year, still \$30, unchanged for years. He will let members know via email how it can be paid.

Everyone at the meeting was given a free ticket for the six plants waiting to be drawn. Winners were: Linda Renwick, Karen Bennett, Nicola Lupton, Ray Walker, Kathy Loyer and Linda Derkach.

Meeting Adjourned at: 2:40 pm

Attracting Birds to Your Garden

Our gardens are very important to the long-term survival of birds, bees and other wildlife, many of which are endangered and declining in numbers at an alarming rate.

To attract these amazing creatures to our gardens, we need to offer food, water and shelter. As well, we need to adopt 'green' practices such as avoiding pesticides, making compost and conserving water.

Here are some things we can all do to ensure that our gardens come alive with our feathered and fuzzy friends – and help them survive.

Provide Food

Birds that eat fruit:

- Waxwings, thrush, robins, woodpeckers and chickadees



Three fledgling cedar waxwings in a willow tree waiting for mom to return with the next meal.

Fall fruit contains more fat and less sugar which is what birds need to get through the winter. Some native plants to grow include:

- Amelanchier (Service berry)

- Dogwood
- Viburnum

Nut and seed eaters:

- Chickadees, siskins, finch, sparrows, jays, flickers, thrushes, woodpeckers, nuthatches



Everyone loves the chestnut-backed chickadee that lives on Vancouver Island – here getting suet and seeds.

What to do:

- Leave seed heads on plants through the winter.
- Don't be too neat – cutting back all that has gone over may look nice but birds need the seeds. And all sorts of small creatures overwinter in stems and seed heads so leave some for the bugs too.



Bushtits will grace your garden in a flock of 10 or 20 – if you are very lucky.

Birds that eat insects and spiders:

- Hummingbirds, nuthatch, bushtits, chickadees, grouse, many song birds



This Rufous Hummingbird is a summer visitor to Vancouver Island. But Anna's Hummingbird overwinters in southern BC. Growing plants that they love year-round is essential, and when there is nothing much in the garden a feeder is critical to their survival. Be sure it doesn't freeze on cold winter days. And they need insects for protein.

What to do:

- Don't be too hasty to do away with tent caterpillars or the fall webworm (look like tent caterpillars but weave their webs in trees and shrubs in late summer)
- Chickadees need 6,000 to 9,000 caterpillars to feed just one clutch of babies

Water is Essential

- Provide a simple bowl
- Keep your dishes clean
- Avoid bird bath heaters in winter or use a plastic grid so birds cannot get into the water and freeze
- Use perching stones for beneficial insects
- If you have a pond, try to have a sloping side for creatures to get in and out easily and safely



Hummingbirds love a mister

- Set a hose on a timer for five minutes a day to provide mist for your hummingbirds in summer.

Offer Shelter

- Hedges are essential for nesting and protection from birds of prey
- Pile dead branches – deciduous and evergreen in an out of the way place
- Vines, ferns and grasses provide cover
- Strive for a diversity of plants

The birdman at our house has lashed together branches of evergreens from Christmases past – under a balcony to stay dry – to create a multi-story “condo”; each year evergreen branches are tucked into the condo to create a cozy place to shelter from winter cold

Nesting Materials Please!

- Don't be too quick to throw away or compost garden materials
- Good nesting materials include down from seed heads, bark, twigs, leaves, needles, lichen, grasses, moss, ferns, real wool and horsehair (that is if you know or have a horse!)



Echinops is much-loved by bees of all kinds. This stand was blooming in July and is still standing in October to provide food for birds.



White-crowned sparrows were very plentiful this year.



The house finch is a seed eater.



Towhees are ground feeders so be sure to leave some leaf litter where they can scratch for bugs.

Erect Nesting and Roosting Boxes

- Put under your overhang to protect from rain
- Do not use any paint
- Scuff the inside for the young to clamber up to the hole
- Ensure you have the right sized hole for the species and keep out predators – check reliable sources on the internet
- Clean out at the end of the nesting season to protect fledglings from mites, etc.
- Use the right kind of wood with no preservatives, etc.

Words: *Linda Derkach*

Qualicum Birds Photographed by Kate Kelly

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