

The Victoria Rhododendron Society Newsletter



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web page - <http://www.VictoriaRhodo.ca>

Monday, March 5th, 7:30 p.m.

AGM

"Alpines within a Rhododendron Garden"

by

David Sellars from South Fraser Rhododendron Society

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This Issue:

San Francisco ARS Convention	pg. 1
AGM notices	pg. 2
Meeting notices	pg. 2
VRS Show Rules and Trophies Lists	pg. 3-4
VRS Show Schedule	pg. 5
April Speaker Mike Snowden	pg. 6
February Speakers writeup	pg. 6
Cox Book Review by Norm Todd	pg. 6-7
Revised VRS Calendar	pg. 8

March Refreshments:

Joe and Linda Harvey, John and Jeanette Howard, Bill and Susan Hyslop, Ian and Daphne Izard, Charlie Johnson and Jason Jones are kindly asked to bring goodies for the assembled members and guests. Please phone **Theresa** at 478-3515 to confirm contributions and willingness to help behind the counter. Thank you all!

San Francisco ARS Convention

The ARS 2007 annual convention is open for business. The web address is <http://www.ars2007conf.org>. Check the Spring ARS Journal for registration forms and details.

The Annual General Meeting

Elections of officers for the ensuing year are scheduled to take place at the AGM to be held during the March 5th meeting.

Nominations of Theresa McMillan and Arthur Ralfs have been received. Further should be submitted in writing to the Co-Chair of the Nominating Committee at least seven days in advance of the AGM, signed by the proposing member and authorized in writing by the person so nominated. Additional nominations to the Board, not to exceed two in number may be made from the floor at the AGM. No one shall be nominated for president or vice-president until he or she has been a member of the Society for at least two years. Only full members of the ARS can vote or be elected to the Board.

Plant Sale & Open Garden

Saturday April 21st 10-1pm- Evelyn Weesjes- Wide selection of ferns, rhododendrons & shrubs-10629 Derrick Road (left off West Saanich Rd. to Downey, left off Downey to Derrick) come early for best selection.

Plant Sale & Open Garden

Sunday April 29th 10-4pm-Carmen Varcoe & Friends- Wide selection of perennials-5450 Old West Saanich Rd. (some parking available next door at the Gazebo B & B

Plantaholic's Plant Sale

Sunday May 20th 9-12pm

WE'VE MOVED! This year 2007 we will be at **ABKHAZI GARDENS**

1964 Fairfield Rd.-Gardens Open Free-Tearoom open from 10-For more info call Abkhazi Gardens 598-8096 Parking at Margaret Jenkins School



Many thanks to Keiko Alkire and Liz Keay who have put in many years serving on the Board of the Victoria Rhododendron Society !

rhodo gif courtesy of @ <http://www.santalady.com/garden.html>

VIRAGS Spring Show

The Vancouver Island Rock and Alpine Garden Society's Annual Spring Show will be held at the Cadboro Bay United Church Hall, 2625 Arbutus Road, Victoria, on Friday, March 30th from 1 PM to 8 PM, and on Saturday, March 31st from 9 AM to 4PM. Commercial growers will be in attendance and the Society's Annual Plant Sale will start on Saturday at 11 AM. Refreshments will be available. Non-member Exhibitors are welcome [Tel 389-1379} or jacqbradbury@shaw.ca]. Admission is by donation.

Bargain Table

Please bring in a plant or two for the bargain table and also rhododendrons for the Raffle and please identify who grew them.

VRS

SHOW and PLANT SALE

Mark Your Calendar



SET UP: APRIL 27th, 2007
9:30 a.m. on...

SHOW: APRIL 28th, 2007

**Please volunteer and enter plants
make it a great show!**

 **The trophy holders are reminded to return their trophies to the March meeting or directly to Jacqueline Bradbury so they may be made ready for the Show in April. Thank you!**

Victoria Rhododendron Society - 2007 Annual Show

April 28, 2007 - 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Set-up for Entries, April 27 - 3 to 7 p.m.

Cadboro Bay United Church Hall,

2625 Arbutus Road, Victoria

General Show Rules

1. Exhibits will be accepted from members, non-members, hobbyists or commercial growers on **Friday, April 27** from **3:00 pm until 7:00 pm**. Later entries cannot be accepted. **No entries will be accepted Saturday, April 28**. Entry pick up will be between 4:00 p.m. and 4:15 p.m. after the show.
2. Exhibitors may enter as many specimens in a given class as are appropriate, but **each must be a separate cultivar**.
3. All plants and trusses should have been in the possession of the exhibitor since August 1 of the preceding year.
4. Rhododendron leaves (Class 83) shall consist of leaves top and underside shown, mounted and displayed on a white or black background.
5. Each exhibitor should use one official entry form to list the class number and plant name for all his/her entries. This form should be left at the registration desk. A show card, with group letter, class number, plant name, exhibitor's name and phone number must be completed for each entry. Help will be available to determine correct names and classes.
6. Classes may be subdivided where numbers warrant. As placement errors have occurred in the past, this year **entries will be placed on the tables only by members of the Show Committee**.
7. Each truss or spray shall be in a bottle appropriate in size. (Preferred are green bottles, eg. The Great Jamaican Ginger Beer Co.) The Society has some of these for use by exhibitors, but not enough for everyone. Please provide your own bottles if possible. The Society will take every care for the protection of all plants and trusses but cannot be held responsible for any loss or damage.
8. Exhibits shall not be removed from the show between the time of judging and the end of the show. **Exhibits may be picked up between 4:00 and 4:15 pm but not before**.
9. During the hours of judging (Saturday morning from 8:00 until 11:00) **all members and exhibitors not on official duty are required to leave the hall**. **Only judges, clerks and assistants** designated by the show chair shall be present during the judging.
10. Exhibits entered in the **photography** section shall follow guidelines used by VIRAGs. They are: digital or conventional colour photographs printed on 8.5" x 11" matte or high resolution photo paper; white margins to 3/8"; each photo to have a sticky label on the back with participant's name, address, phone number; captions must fit under the photo (i.e. just under 8" for a vertical or 10.5" for a horizontal picture format; captions can be computer printed (Arial 16 font) or neatly printed by hand; captions for plants in their native habitat should name the locality.
11. The judges' decision shall be final and no ribbon or trophy shall be awarded if, in the opinion of the judges, no exhibit is of sufficient merit.

Awards

- 1. The de Rothschild Challenge Trophy**, a perpetual silver cup given to the Victoria Rhododendron Society in 1989 by Edmond de Rothschild, shall be awarded for the best rhododendron entry in the show whatever the class. The winning entry shall receive a silver keeper cup. A repeat winner will have engraving added to their original keeper.
- 2. The Gibson Memorial Trophy** given by Ken and Dot Gibson to honour Ken's mother shall be awarded to the exhibitor accumulating the most points.
- 3. The Fraser Memorial Trophy** given by the Society shall be awarded to the best truss or spray of a Vancouver Island hybrid.
- 4. The Jim Calder Memorial Trophy** given by Evelyn and Nick Weesjes shall be awarded to the best species truss or spray.
- 5. The Jean and Norman Todd Trophy** shall be awarded to the best lepidote species grown in a container.
- 6. The Angus and Mary Boyd Trophy** shall be awarded for the best entry by a novice (i.e. a person who has not previously won a trophy in a show sponsored by the Victoria Rhododendron Society.)
- 7. The Mary Henderson Trophy** donated in her name by her family shall be awarded for the best hybrid rhododendron truss or spray.
- 8. The Herman and Hella Vaartnou Plate** shall be awarded to the best rhododendron (not azalea) truss or spray that is fragrant (Class 56).
- 9. Mary's Memorial** shall be awarded to the best rhododendron companion plant (flower, spray or plant).
- 10. The Alec McCarter Bowl** shall be awarded to the best Northwest hybrid. Eligible plants will have been hybridized in Washington State or British Columbia.
- 11. The Webb Trophy** shall be awarded to the 'People's Choice' selection. The winner will be announced in the May Newsletter.

District One Meeting

How many would attend a **Species Day** workshop if it were held in Vancouver and what would the number be if it were held in Victoria? There are a number of District One members who have not attended one of these but would like to. They feel that it takes too much time to attend when it is being held in Seattle and it also is quite expensive. It should take less travel and be less expensive if held in either Victoria or Vancouver or maybe alternate between the two cities. Please advise mdeweese@shaw.ca or 250-748-0538 so she can report approximate numbers to the March 4th District One meeting.

Haiku Philosophy by Joe and Linda Harvey

Disastrous weather
Snow, flood, wind, frost endlessly
It is just winter

Victoria Rhododendron Show Schedule 2007

- A. SPECIES** (Greer pages 80 to 83)
LEPIDOTE (truss or spray)
 1. Section Pogonanthum (Anthopogon)
 2. Sub-section Boothia
 3. Campylogyna
 4. Cinnabarina
 5. Edgeworthia
 6. Glauca
 7. Heliolepidia
 8. Laponica
 9. Maddenia (a) outdoor (b) with protection
 10. Triflora (a) Augustinii (b) all others
 11. Any lepidote not above
ELEPIDOTE (truss)
 12. Sub-section Arborea
 13. Barbata
 14. Campanulata
 15. Falconera & Grandia
 16. Fortunea
 17. Irrorata
 18. Neriiflora
 19. Pontica
 (a) yakushmanum (b) all others
 20. Taliensia
 21. Thomsonia
 22. Any elepidote not above
- B. HYBRIDS**
ELEPIDOTE (truss)
 23. Red
 24. Red with flair/blotch
 25. Red multicolour
 26. White
 27. White with flair/blotch
 28. White multicolour
 29. Pink
 30. Pink with flair/blotch
 31. Pink multicolour
 32. Dark pink/rose
 33. Dark pink/rose with flair/blotch
 34. williamsianum hybrids (a) pink
 (b) white/creamy/yellow
35. Blue/mauve/purple
 36. Blue/mauve/purple with flair/blotch
 37. Blue/mauve/purple multicolour
 38. Cream
 39. Cream with flair/blotch
 40. Cream multicolour
41. Yellow
 42. Yellow with flair/blotch
 43. Yellow multicolour
 44. Orange/salmon
 45. Orange/salmon with flair/blotch
46. Orange/salmon multicolour
LEPIDOTE HYBRIDS (truss or spray)
 47. White lepidote
 48. Pink lepidote
 49. Blue/mauve/purple lepidote
 50. Cream lepidote
 51. Yellow lepidote
 52. Orange/salmon lepidote
- D. NEW HYBRIDS** (truss or spray - must have been grown from seed by exhibitor)
 54. (e.g. from ARS seed) (a) lepidote (b) elepidote (c) azalea
 55. Hybridized & grown from seed by exhibitor
 (a) Rhododendron (b) Azalea
E. FRAGRANT RHODODENDRON (truss or spray)
 56. For best fragrance of a rhododendron, species or hybrid, but NOT an AZALEA
F. RHODODENDRON PLANTS
 57. Lepidote species
 58. Elepidote species
 59. Lepidote hybrid
 60. Elepidote hybrid
 61. Foliage plant, not necessarily in bloom (species or hybrid)
 62. Vireya, species or hybrid
G. AZALEA SPECIES (truss or spray)
 63. Deciduous
 64. Evergreen
H. AZALEA: EVERGREEN HYBRIDS (truss or spray)
 65. Red
 66. White
 67. Pink
 68. Blue/purple
 69. Orange/salmon
I. AZALEA: DECIDUOUS HYBRIDS (truss or spray)
 70. Red
 71. White
 72. Pink
 73. Yellow
 74. Orange/salmon
J. AZALEA PLANTS
 75. Evergreen - species or hybrid
 76. Deciduous - species or hybrid
 77. Foliage plant, not necessarily in bloom (species or hybrid)
K. AZALEADENDRON
 78. Any azaleadendron - plant, spray or truss
L. COMPANION PLANTS
 79. (a) Camellia truss (a1) floating flower and leaves
 (b) Magnolia
 (c) Other - Non-Woody
 (d) Other - Woody
M. DISPLAYS
 80. Arrangements - rhododendron or azalea flowers
 81. Bonsai - rhododendron or azalea, less than 24 inches
 82. Educational
 83. Exhibit of leaves
 84. Photography (a) colour (b) black and white
- N. NORTHWEST HYBRID (WASHINGTON-B.C.)**
 85. **LEPIDOTE OR ELEPIDOTE** (truss)
O. HAMMERHEADS
 86. **ELEPIDOTE** (truss)
- NOTES:**
 Lax - An open, loose truss with drooping pedicels (flower stalks) e.g. Fabia
 Flair/blotch - A spotty or solid patch of a different shade or colour e.g. Mrs. T.H. Lowinsky, Mrs. Frunival, Golden Wit
 Elepidote - without scales e.g. arboreum, fortunei, Vulcan
 Lepidote - scurfy - with minute scales on leaves e.g. maddenii, impeditum
 Truss - a single rachis (i.e. all flowers coming from one

- C. VANCOUVER ISLAND HYBRIDS
53. Truss or spray (a)Rhododendron
(b) Azalea
(c)Rhodo Plant, (c1) Azalea Plant

bud)
Spray - multi stems emerging from a single stem. Height is measured from the top of the container and must be under 16 inches. Width cannot exceed height.

April 9th Speaker **MIKE C. SNOWDEN BEM. AHRHS**

Mike Snowden will be our speaker on the evening of April 9th. Mike is a recently retired Head Gardener at the famous garden Rowallane, in County Down, Northern Ireland.

He began his career in horticulture working as a landscape gardener, then working in 'Local Authority Parks' for several years. During this time he took courses at home, and passed the examination of the Royal Horticultural Society.

He became propagator at Harewood House, in Yorkshire, where propagating rhododendrons formed a considerable part of his work, then moved to Bodnant Garden in North Wales as part of the propagating team there.

With this accumulation of experience in major British gardens, he moved on to take up the position of Head Gardener at Erddig, near Wrexham, also in North Wales, where he was responsible for a major restoration of the formal 18th-century garden, its overlays, and the immediate surrounding area. He says that he has 'always had a preference for a holistic approach to gardening'.

It was at this point that he took up the position of Head Gardener at Rowallane, eventually becoming responsible for the total management as Property Manager.

Rowallane is 'executed on a natural landscape'. The garden was begun in the 1850s by the Rev John Moore, and continued by his nephew Hugh Armitage-Moore, who introduced numerous trees and shrubs including many rhododendrons, both species and hybrids. It was taken over by The National Trust in 1955.

Mike was awarded the British Empire Medal while still at Erddig, and became an Associate of Honour of the Royal Horticultural Society while at Rowallane. He also received the J. A. Whaley Medal for his work with rhododendrons.

He retired from Rowallane in 2000, and continues to live in Saintfield, County Down, Northern Ireland, with his evidently very supportive and inspirational wife June. They continue to be involved in the 'world of gardening within Ireland and beyond'.

Known as a lively speaker, Mike has been the Director of one of Northern Ireland's most distinguished gardens. We should all be looking forward to hearing his talk,

'Rowallane; a special garden in the North of Ireland'

Joe Ronsley
Margaret deWeese

February Presentations

Jason Jones on Macrophotography segued beautifully into Agnes and Dave Lynns' presentation of local wildflowers in the months of April and May. All of us came away inspired by the beauty of closeup photography showing the textures, the flower parts, the dew and the raindrops. As a viewer I marvelled at the diversity of wildflowers we are privileged to have in areas so near to hand: Satin flowers *Sisyrinchium douglasii*, Chocolate lilies *Fritillaria camschatcensis, lanceolata*, Shooting Stars *Dodecatheon hendersonii*, Ladyslippers *Calypso bulbosa*, pinks and white Easter Lilies *Erythronium montanum, oregonum, revolutum*. The Wild Ginger, golden Indian Paintbrush, *Castilleja leveisecta* wild delphiniums, camass, the blue, the blue and white and the white Death Camass, the mosses and Jason's rhododendron hybrid closeups all refreshed our winter-weary minds with the promise of spring. Congratulations to Jason for his picture of R.'Nancy Evans', the Pacific Northwest Hybrid selection of the Year on pg. 43 of the spring ARS Journal.

Rhododendrons & Azaleas A Colour Guide **by Kenneth Cox**

reviewed by Norman Todd

This recently published book from the famous Scottish Cox family maintains the acquisition momentum if one wants to keep up to date on rhododendrons.

The basic format is the same as the one that Harold Greer has used in his *Guidebook to Available*

Rhododendrons i.e. an alphabetical listing of plants with short descriptions and with a fair number of them shown in colour. Greer lists all the species (except *Vireyas*) and about 1400 hybrids. The Cox list of species includes all of the temperate climate rhododendrons and some of the *Vireyas*. The book includes a description of about 3000 hybrids. Greer's photographs are bigger but less in number. There is a rough correspondence between the number of plants described and the cost of the books. For Vancouver Island growers they are essential complements.

Those of us who have met Kenneth Cox know he is a man with opinions. In the opening pages he admits to his subjectivity and invites comment as he hopes there will be a second edition. His curt remarks on some of the plants will bring a smile or a pang of pain to the reader. For me they pay the price of the book. For example, in describing the famous, or infamous, Lofthouse's 'Pink Petticoats', he says, "One of the ugliest foliage plants I have ever seen." On 'Pontiyak', he says, "Why anyone would even make this cross is a mystery to me (I admit to making it once myself and soon threw out the results.)"

The species rhododendrons are not listed alphabetically but are arranged within the list of plants as Kenneth Cox has opted for a sequence that is grouped around the best-known species. Thus there is section, for example, on *Maddenia* species and hybrids, one on Dwarf Lepidote Hybrids and one 'Yak Hybrids'. There is a complete alphabetical index at the back of the book and so you are required to refer to this before looking up a variety you know only by name. Greer lists everything in alphabetical order and consequently may be a little easier to use. On balance I prefer the Cox arrangement because most gardeners will use the book to pick a plant for use in a specific site and will be able to make comparisons more readily.

However, be warned there are plants listed that you have never heard of. In an ideal world half of your garden would be here on Vancouver Island and the other half in Scotland. With the current restrictions on importing plants it is somewhat frustrating to see photographs of many unknown, sweaty-hand inducing varieties.

Cox introduces a new set of hardiness ratings based on the old RHS system of H1 to H4, the latter meaning cold hardy anywhere in the UK. As he explains in the text H4 only means the plant is hardy at Wisley, England, the RHS headquarters and is thus totally inadequate.

Cox states his new system introduces four additional divisions, which would give eight gradations, when in fact the table in the book has ten. (There is a minor typographical error in the printed table in that a plus sign is shown in the Celsius column where a negative sign is intended.) The new system he shows is divided in increments of five degrees Fahrenheit. This would seem to be a useful scale but he should have used a designation other than H. When reading other texts, is the old or the new system being used? Then to confound the matter in the latest *Journal of the ARS*, (Winter 2007), Kenneth has an article on *Variiegated Leaved Rhododendrons and Azaleas* in which he includes a table for hardiness ratings with six divisions with the H numbers being partially inconsistent with those in the book. For example H6 in the book is -15F to -10F whereas in the article H6 is -20F to -10F. My preference is to use a single number for temperature as Greer does, e.g. hardy to -5F. We all know this is merely a guide: exposure, duration of cold, soil moisture etc. all being germane.

The inclusion of sections on deciduous and evergreen azaleas is very useful. These he divides into the well-known types. The deciduous hybrid azaleas are sorted under the headings Ghent, Rustica, Mollis, Knaphill (Exbury), Northern Species Hybrids and Southern Species Hybrids. In the introduction to the Knaphill hybrids the author says, "The over-naming of hybrids in this group has become absurd: there are hundreds of virtually identical cultivars: frankly once you have twenty of these, you have all the colour variations you need." As a small-time vendor I am in total agreement. Potential customers see an appealing plant in some location, note the name and become very leery of accepting the salesperson's plea that another one is just as good.

I'm sure my copy will soon become soiled and dog-eared. I would rate this book as an essential reference, a very worthwhile addition to the bookcase. If one's rhododendron library is limited to two books, pick Greer's *Guide to Available Rhododendrons* and Cox's *Rhododendrons & Azaleas A Colour Guide*.