

The Victoria Rhododendron Society *Newsletter*



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December 2008

Twenty-seventh Year of Publication

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web page – <http://victoriarhodo.ca>

Christmas Party

6:30 pm Monday, December 1, 2008

Garth Homer Centre, 811 Darwin Street, Victoria BC

Theme: A Scottish Celebration

Pictures of the many gardens in Edinburgh, Scotland
by our members who attended the
Scottish meeting.



*For details of the
party see page 2*

Refreshments for the Christmas Party

This year, we are returning to a two-thirds savories proportion in our pot-luck. So attendees from A to K are encouraged to bring sweets, while L to W are asked to come with savories. This is a guideline only, and no reproach will be, as James Fuller would express it, "attached to anyone wishing to break ranks." Karen is providing the ham. If you can come early to help, please do. (Details page 2)

Comments from the President

by Margaret deWeese

Glen Jamieson gave a great talk, in spite of a 30 hour flight on Sunday, coming home jet lagged to work on his presentation for November 6th (Thursday), only to be phoned by Bill to see if he wanted to meet for dinner on Monday and being surprised not to meet before the talk night.

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Glen replied: "Why don't we meet on Thursday before my talk?" only to be told the meeting was indeed that evening!

I had referenced the original email date and noted November 6th but did not check the actual day. When I had booked Glen we were still Thursday nights and I forgot to inform him of the change to Mondays night meetings. So, I sincerely apologize to our speaker.

Still Glen smiled and was so gracious. It was an inspired lecture, complete with a totally organized talk on The Mount Kilimanjaro of Borneo, "Mount Kinabalu: in the eastern flatland

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*The Victoria Rhododendron Society
annual Christmas Dinner meeting
will be*

*Monday, December 1
at the
Garth Homer Centre
at 6:30 p.m.*

*Members A to K please bring
dessert*

*Members L to Z please bring
a savory or salad dish*

*The Club will provide a
cooked ham, punch and serviettes*

*Please provide your own dishes, cutlery and cups
Raffle donations, of plants and especially crafts
would be appreciated*

*Raffle proceeds will be donated to the Mustard Seed
but also please bring
non-perishables for the food bank*

Program - A Scottish Celebration

*Photos and memories from our members
who travelled to Scotland for the International Convention*

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where the eco parklands of Sabah with Mt. Kinabalu, looking rather like a bread maker 's loaf upright in a field near the ocean ,waves swelling and rolling in toward this rich diversity of rare plants.

Glen is an inveterate and passionate traveler. He is organizing interesting tours to fascinating regions of the globe: next, in January to the Galapagos Archipelago, 600 miles off the coast of South America and reached via a short flight from Quito, Ecuador. And in a couple of years to the Park of Sabah wherein sits Mount Kinabalu. The park is a government sanctuary, very safe and eco protected from the many greedy people who take advantage of unprotected rare orchids, pitcher plants, and vireyas.

Those of us who have struggled with these small gorgeous and tender rhododendrons were amazed to see how well they grow in the just right climatic conditions each vireya species has evolved in, so if you grow lowland vireyas they have to be really warm (didn't Glen say it was 35C ?) and if you grow upper montane vireyas they have to be cool.

I have a great R. rushforthii from Viet Nam, which grows high up at elevations where Dr. Brian White, our September speaker, assists with eco tourism through the Royal Roads program. R. ruthforthii with its celadon leaves which grows in a hanging basket at my house, occasionally sits in the pond for a good soak and then is pulled to drain. I do believe it could be grown in a light weight medium, perhaps a tree stump, like R. edgeworthii, with success in a protected area on Southern Vancouver Island, but I can't quite bring myself to believe it! So, I bring it in to the greenhouse for the winter.

Glen is passionate about vireyas, establishing his Sans Pareil Nursery and going in search of lovely hybrid vireyas and bringing in Species Vireyas from Bovees Nursery in Portland (the largest vireya nursery in North America) and the newly built and still in need of funds, RSF Vireya House at Federal Way, Washington. There is a very good nursery on

Hilo, Oahu, Pacific Sands which many of you have visited. To import you must have a Canadian Agricultural permit to send with your order. You can no longer do it from the US, including Hawaii where Sherla Bartleman and Richard Marques of Pacific Sands Nursery will package your vireya order, bare rooted but well packed in damp moss for good air passage. I intended to replace some of my many losses when I didn't know how to care for them properly. Now they sit amongst my orchids growing easily in an orchid bark mix, easily purchased from any grocery outlet!

Back to Glen. This one man really stirred the interest in Vancouver Island by being so proactive.

For years I had visited online the best vireya site in the world and wished for success, feasting my eyes on the thousands of images on Chris' excellent website: Chris Callard's <http://www.vireya.net>

I don't know about you, but I am planning to accompany Glen's tour to Mt. Kinabalu in a year or so. He said the air fare is about \$3000 (enough to save for in that time period) and park accommodation is so inexpensive, clean and basic and best of all, safe, which will provide me with a not so dangerous trip into the wonders of the park's flora and fauna. I hope to have a few or many of you along, especially Keiko, who introduced me to my purple black lady slipper orchid (*paphiopedilum*) and a newly transferred member and great friend of Glen's from the Qualicum Chapter, Dorothy Griffin, so we three 'slightly getting on ladies' can enjoy the real adventure and not just the armchair version of magic!

I am going to write a version of this article for the Friends of Finnerty Garden newsletter for later publication but I can't help inserting this for Glen.

As he climbed to the summit, he began suf-

fering from hypothermia.. When he reached the shelter in the driving rain, he could not feel his numb hands to sign in and so made a straight line to register. Around him, regions of Myanmar to the southwest were being devastated in a roaring part of the world.

Lo! to the vault
Of paved heaven,
With sorrow fraught
My songs are driven:
They strike the ear of night,
Make weep the eyes of day;
They make mad the roaring winds.
And with tempests play.
Like a fiend in a cloud,
With howling woe,
After night I do croud
And with night will go:
I turn my back to the east,
From whence comforts have increas'd;
For light doth seize my brain
With frantic pain.

William Blake

Oh, by the way Anne Allen and Ian Duncan suggested a new Trophy class for the Vireya Class for the 2009 Show and Sale, which has a very appropriate name, as suggested by Gareth, Membership Member at Large and long time VRS member. The special unveiling will be done at a Spring meeting before the Show and Sale on April 25th. So, be preparing your entries which it is hoped will bloom at the same time, although many will tantalize and not be ready for that dazzling display. Donated by John Hawkins for the raffle table was the gloriously scented deep white lobed beauty, *Rhododendron crutwellii*. It was won by Burns and Karen Morrison. As I said at the meeting, Rev. Crutwell spent thirty five years in Papua New Guinea following his avocation in the Church but passion lit up his

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eyes for the botanical wonders of his God in the vireyas to which he gave the rhododendron world his painstaking research. Isn't the world fascinating?

And on a Scottish note, see you at the December Ceilidh! Tartans if appropriate, plaid ribbon if not!

If you have 'print treats to spare for the book sale to help the Mustard Seed funds, and if you are now so knowledgeable about rhododendron culture, you can donate your old rhodo books for new members to buy for augmented learning, everybody wins!

Margaret

.Review of Glen Jamieson's talk, Nov. 3, 2008

By Theresa McMillan

Glen began his talk with Google Earth images of "Vireya Land", an equatorial area in Southeast Asia centering on Borneo, which has 28 species of vireyas, only 6 of which are endemic. Glen chose to visit the area of Sabah, near the spectacular Mount Kinabalu, often called South Asia's Mount Kilimanjaro. On the way to Borneo, Glen stopped at Hong Kong, and showed us pictures of the skyscrapers overlooking the large and lush central park. One tall building under construction featured scaffolding made of bamboo, which is strong enough to be used instead of steel.

In Sabah, Borneo, Glen stayed at the deluxe Mesilau Sutera Resort, and visited the local village. Many people there spoke English, for Malaysia had been a British colony in the past. One curious plant Glen saw that grows



Google EARTH picture of the Mt. Kinabalu area

in Malaysian rain forests is *nepenthes rajah*, a very large carnivorous pitcher plant.

Mount Kinabalu is very popular with climbers, but it is so high (over 4,000 meters) and so big (about the size of Mount Baker) and takes so long to hike up its steep slopes that there is a dormitory-like resort near the top where climbers can rest before the final ascent.

As Glen and his native guide climbed the slopes, Glen took many photographs of vireyas, including ones that climbed around trees. He also got several pictures of orchids and other exotic plants. An oddity that he photographed was a long blue earthworm that was the prime menu item for a smaller red leech.

He had to give up photography and put his digital camera away because of potential damage by the wind and rain. He was being drenched by horizontal gusts.

Glen rested at the resort, then continued his climb. A network of ropes aided the final climb up bare shiny granite slopes because many climbers start in the dark so they can witness dawn from the peak.

The terrible weather, the product of three typhoons, had continued overnight, but Glen was able to reach the top of the mountain.

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Down from the mountain, Glen was able to see some rafflesia, a parasitic plant that produces the largest single flower on earth, a rich red in colour. We also saw pictures of rare pygmy elephants, proboscis monkeys and orangutans.

We appreciated Glen's good cheer, even though he was jet-lagged from arriving back from China Sunday evening, his talk on his experiences on Mount Kinabalu, and his beautiful pictures.

Glendale Rhododendron and Hosta Garden

Summary Report for 2007-2008

By Bill McMillan, Curator

- Routine Maintenance of mature areas of the garden – weed, fertilize, mulch, deadhead, prune. Our small dedicated volunteer base is great but a few VRS members would be welcome.
- Lifted smaller rhodos and replaced soil with sand-bark mulch-compost mix to improve drainage; replant them higher (root balls above ground level)
- Split hostas for Glendale sale last fall and this fall
- Removed rhodos with phytophthora and brought in a number of new replacement rhodos and companion plants (for example, brunneras, fuchsias, dianthus, hebes, hydrangeas, and a trillium, an astilbe, a boykinia, and several kinds of primulas). Added several species and several hybrids produced by Mike Bale and others. Some 24 new rhododendrons and ten new hosta species have been added in the last 3 years.



One of our new additions; R. hodgsonii donated by Doug and Barbara Newton

- Added three donated magnolias, M. zenii, M. 'Pegasus', M. 'Eric Savill', to the garden and two more that we bought from UBC (M. zenii and M. 'Pegasus'). The three magnolias were donated in memory of Charley Johnson
- Kept Excel database current but got be-

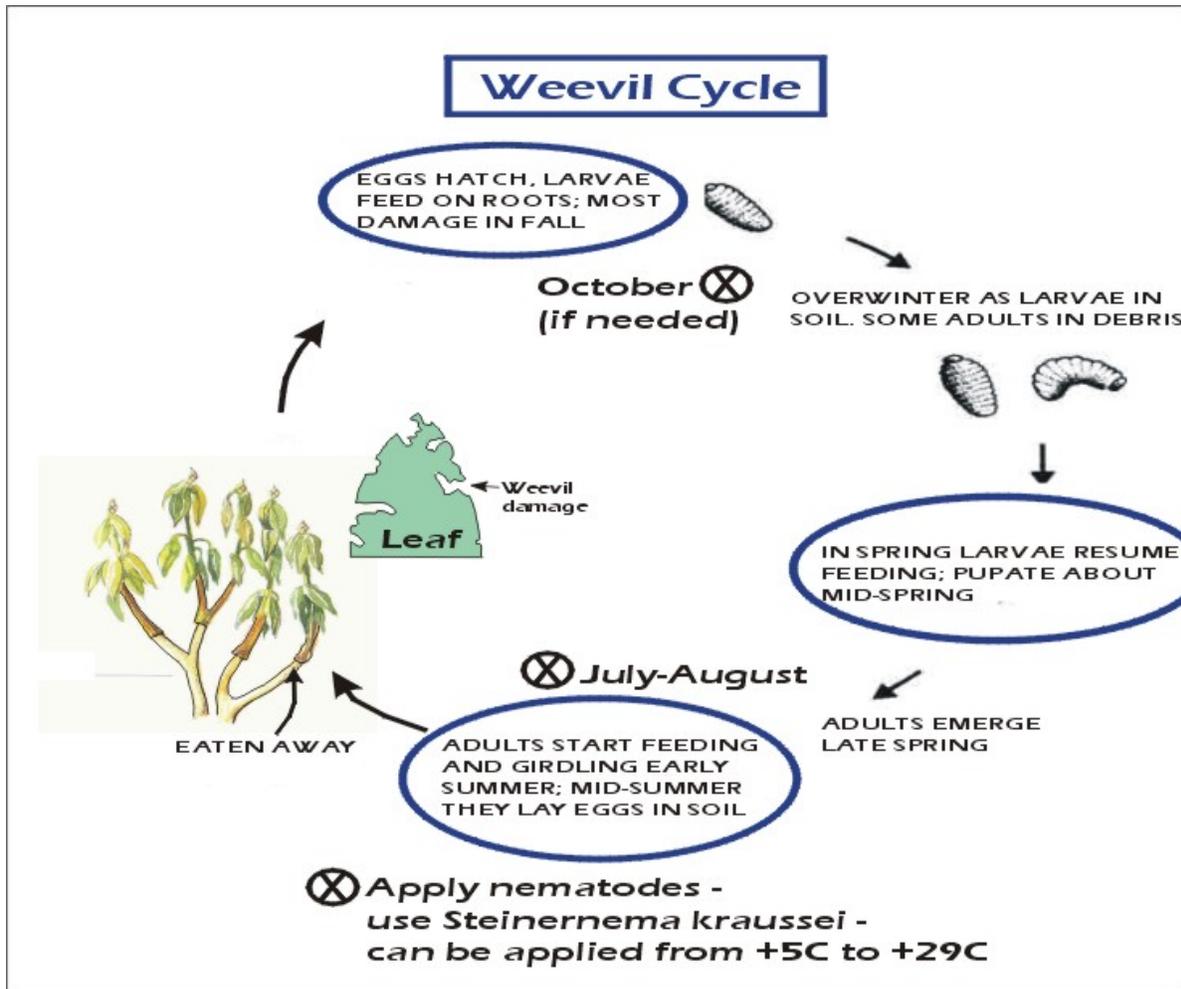


Another new addition is R. 'Coral Glow'

hind on updating the MS Access database

- Dead fir trees were taken out and stumps in two beds were ground up. The bed

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Adult Obscure Root Weevil
(7 to 15 mm in size)



IMMANENT LIGHT
 An exhibition and sale of watercolours by
FLEMMING JORGENSEN

These luminous works, from Jorgensen's garden series, have been donated to the Abkhazi Garden with the goal to raise funds for garden illumination. In honour of the event the works will be sold well below market value to encourage the art collector and Abkhazi Garden supporters.

Opening Reception: Sunday, November 16, 3–5pm
 Exhibition continues through November 30, 2008

ABKHAZI GARDEN
 1964 Fairfield Road, 250-598-8096 for more information
 Curated by FRAN WILLIS and sponsored by ILLUMINATIONS

near the entry steps was redesigned and new plantings added. The 'Fern Grotto' (Bed S) has had drainage improved and many new plants added.

- Drainage channels were added as 'dry creek beds' in several areas and a student project added drainage pipes in Bed S
- began plans for changing watering system in a number of areas to a micro system

Funding provided by VRS has been instrumental in maintaining the garden and acquiring many of the new plants. Plant donations are also important and gratefully acknowledged. Please come out to the garden and see what we have accomplished in your name.



Overview of the Glendale Rhododendron and Hosta garden from the Native Plant garden last spring.