

The Victoria Rhododendron Society Newsletter



Box 5562 Postal Station B, Victoria BC Canada V8R 6S4

Garth Homer Centre, 811 Darwin Street, Victoria, B.C.

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e-mail: mdeweese@shaw.ca

web page www.victoriarhodo.ca

Monday, November 5th at 7:30 p.m.

Paige Woodward on Species Paeony collecting in China

Paige Woodward is highly recommended by Glen Patterson as a lively and notable speaker. With her mother, Patricia Woodward, she runs a small rare-plants nursery in Chilliwack. It is surrounded by 80 acres of wild land that will become the Hillkeep Nature Reserve.



P. delavayi

photo by Paige Woodward

She leads study-tours to China. The study-tour in May, 2006 focussed on species peonies in the wild.

From her website, www.hillkeep.ca:

Starting in Beijing, we stopped briefly in Gansu Province, then continued west through Sichuan Province into Tibet (Xizang). Our botanical leaders are two dear friends of mine: Dr. Hong Deyuan, China's foremost botanist, who has been studying peonies around the world, and American peony authority Dr. James W. Waddick. As on the previous two Peonies of China study-tours, we visited fascinating places forbidden to ordinary tourists, met peony connoisseurs both prominent and humble, saw a lot of great plants besides peonies, including rhododendrons, visited important cultural sites, caught glimpses of ordinary Chinese life in the hinterlands, and feasted on delicious local foods.

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wtmcmillan@telus.net	
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deangoard@shaw.ca	
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mdeweese@shaw.ca	
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jacqbradbury@shaw.ca	
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awiddowson@shaw.ca	
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wtmcmillan@telus.net	
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Lois Blackmore	478-6615
loisb@shaw.ca	
Dick Pitfield	592-4261
rpitfield@telus.net	
Arthur Ralfs	479-2629
acralfs@shaw.ca	
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Refreshments

The following are on the list to bring sweet nourishment to the November meeting: **Nadine Minckler, Rhonda Rose, Susan Leacock and Brian Saunders, Ann and Michel Schau, Gareth and Mae Shearman.** Please contact **Theresa McMillan** to confirm. Many thanks from all of us.

As Theresa is taking on the newsletter duties the club needs three people to step forward to coordinate the refreshments. As people on the monthly list look after serving the tea and coffee, the shared job would entail light work.

Welcome to New Members:

**Jan Dammel
Peter Barriscale
Dorothy Griffin**

VRS Fee Schedule for 2008

The time is at hand to renew memberships. Last chance to get the four ARS Journals with a full ARS membership which helps in the promotion of the genus Rhododendron, scientific research and conferences.

ARS Full Membership \$50
VRS Membership \$25
Associate Membership \$10

Dues will be taken for 2008 at the November and December meetings by **Dean Goard** and assistant, **Lois Blackmore**.

**FRED COLLINS
1917-2007**

Fred Collins, a founding member of this society, has died. Fred was 91. Fred was a long-time member of the Vancouver Chapter and will be remembered there for his energy and enthusiasm. In those days he lived in Maple Ridge where he was an Industrial Arts teacher. He also ran a nursery and I can recall him reminiscing about the plants he grew there. He was particularly fond of deciduous azaleas and camellias.

I think it was in 1978 or 79 that Fred retired and moved to the Island. The house he and Annabel bought had a magnificent view of Satellite Channel. We were invited — summonsed — to that house for the primary purpose of starting a chapter of the ARS in Victoria. Fred had heard that a group of us met in Dave Ballantyne's lab at U Vic on Saturday mornings to talk about rhododendrons. This group would form the nucleus. Some of the well-known Victoria rhododendron growers were not overly optimistic about the viability of a club in our fair city. Fred dismissed their fears as groundless. After all, he argued, all we needed were twelve ARS members, and to write and submit a rudimentary constitution and we were off and running.

Fred was also instrumental in getting the Cowichan Valley Chapter started. By that time the Collins had moved to a house near Duncan. He attended their meetings with school-like regularity and was active in all their affairs. The Collins had two daughters and a son. Both daughters were world-class skaters and one performed with the Ice Follies, an achievement that Fred, always reserved and unassuming, would slip quietly into the conversation.

I know of three rhododendrons he named and was particularly fond of — 'Orient', 'Superlady' and 'Annabel'. Fred was a great plantsman who made very significant contributions to the gardening world both here on the Island and on the mainland. Those who knew him will remember him with great affection.

Garth Wedemire

Our October Speaker Garth Wedemire gave us a three part talk. The first was a history on the RSF and the second a photo essay on the RSF Species Study Sessions over the past seven years, led by Steve Hootman. It was interesting to see what is involved from microscopes, eye scopes, RSF garden lookouts and rhododendron camaraderie. It was fun to see many of our members and other friends in District One's knowledgeable rhododendron base in attendance. The third part of the talk was a visual treat of Species Rhododendrons in bloom from A to Z on a CD-ROM, accompanied by a soothing CD of a Tibetan chant. "O manni" Norman Todd summed up the talk beautifully by saying "Oh man, that was some presentation!" Garth has kindly offered to give us a copy of his beautifully photographed CD-ROM for our library.

**Congratulations to Ken Denman, his team
and to Al Gore Jr.**

On Friday 12th October, it was announced that the Nobel Peace Prize for 2007 is to be shared, in two equal parts, between the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and Albert Arnold (Al) Gore Jr. "for their efforts to build up and disseminate greater knowledge about man-made climate change, and to lay the foundations for the measures that are needed to counteract such change."

Along with hundreds of other scientists from around the world, our September speaker Ken Denman has been able to bask in a little piece of the Nobel glory. As an expert in the science of climate change, he has contributed to various IPCC reports over the years, as an author, editor and provider of scientific knowledge. Most recently Ken edited part of the IPCC report "Climate Change 2007: The Physical Science Basis." He attended the report presentation in Paris and provided explanations for the media and he has continued to provide information for the media and other scientists at other international meetings.

(information from the Times/Colonist newspaper)

Sets of five VRS rhododendron photo cards and envelopes will be for sale in time for Christmas at the November and December meetings .

Rhododendrons featured: photos by Bill McMillan: R. macropyllum, R. augustinii, R.'Fabia' , R. 'Horizon Monarch' and R. 'Transit Gold' by Margaret deWeese, Cost per set will be \$8. 00 Proceeds to the VRS fund.

VRS Scholarship Recipient

Dear Sir/Madame,

I am greatly honoured to have received the 2007 Victoria Rhododendron Society Scholarship and I would like to express my extreme gratitude.

I have recently completed my Bachelor's degree in Biology at the University of Victoria and have begun an optional fifth year biology co-op work term with the Canadian Forest Service. Currently my career focus is in pest management, especially in the areas of invasive or alien insects and plants. In addition, I have a keen interest in conservation and biodiversity research, which may also influence my future career choices.

Thank you very much; your gift is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
Meghan Bland

Christmas Party

Please begin to think about the VRS Christmas Party and what you would like to donate to the Christmas Raffle. This raffle is a fund raiser for a needy cause in Victoria . Each attendee brings something unwrapped that is garden related (not necessarily rhododendron related.) Then tickets are sold in duplicate strips and you may choose which item you wish. Place ONE of the two identical tickets in a plastic cup beside the item. It is lots of fun and the more tickets you buy the better your chances! The items should not exceed ten dollars in value.

More in the next newsletter regarding the party on December 3rd.

Cowichan Valley Garden Tour

Saturday, October 20th

For those of you unable to attend the tour of Margaret deWeese's garden, you really missed out. Situated on just over four acres, it has a large spring fed pond .There are numerous seating areas situated around the pond, and what would a Japanese garden be without a zigzag bridge? As the group toured around the pond a Great Blue Heron squawked, flew from its perch and landed in a fir tree further away. As there are many Japanese Acers dressed in their finest fall colours, it is quite a show stopper. There is also a Teahouse which has a wonderful view of the main house, garden and pond. This is a truly a calming garden.

The land was raw when Margaret bought it twenty five years ago, She has done an excellent job of balancing the natural forest with her planted gardens. It now has a lovely home, again with a Japanese theme.

After the first half of the garden tour, Margaret spoiled us with a wonderful lunch of tasty sandwiches, fruit and vegetable trays, (catered by Genoa Cafe) wine and coffee. We then toured the second half of the garden.

Margaret, we thank you very much for your hospitality and ensuring the weather cooperated.

Upon leaving Margaret's a group of us headed to the Cherry Point Nursery and had a tour of the grounds from hosts, Ann and Roger Slaby ,and we got to sample fresh apples from their tree.

We thought touring members gardens was a wonderful way to spend the day.

Nadine and Mike Minckler