

# The Victoria Rhododendron Society

## Newsletter



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

December 2010 Thirtieth Year of Publication

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**MEETING -6:30 (Christmas  
Potluck Dinner!!!)  
MONDAY, December 6, 2010**

**GARTH HOMER CENTRE, 811 DARWIN STREET,  
VICTORIA, B. C.**

### **CHRISTMAS POTLUCK DINNER**

(more details on page 2)

A few years ago, we noticed that the Potluck Dinner's savories, salads and meats section was nearly all gone while the sweets section had plenty of goodies left.

So we are continuing what we did last year, with 2/3 of the members asked to bring savories, and the other 1/3 to bring sweets.

I'm sure this division is good for our waistlines!



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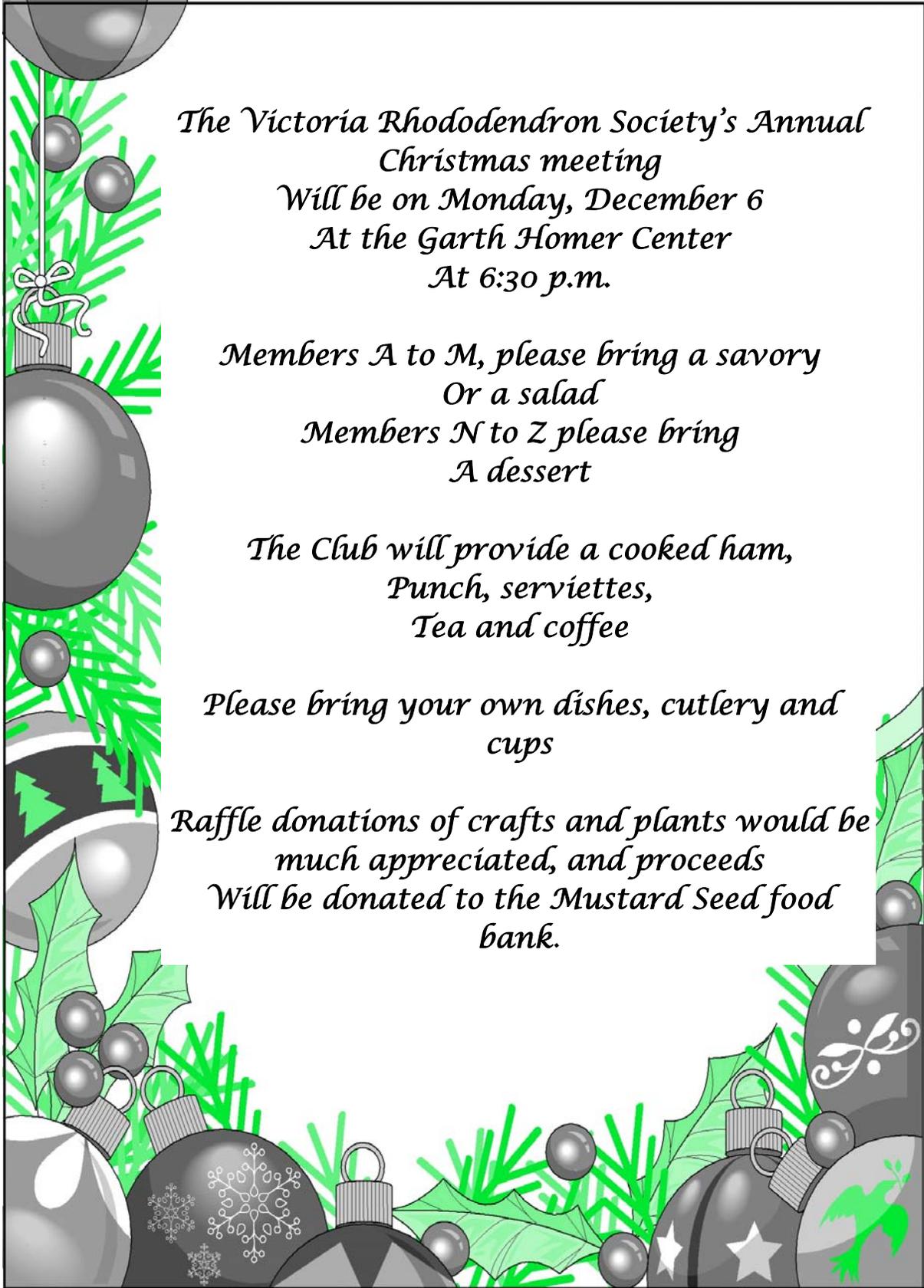
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### **A Review of November's Talks and Presentations by Theresa McMillan**

Don Whittle and Dean Goard both showed very clear pictures of their individual ways of growing seeds from germination to garden-ready stages.

Don gets seeds from ARS seed exchange, Rhododendron Society Species Foundation, and local hybridizers. He finds coarse peat moss the best medium for germination.



*The Victoria Rhododendron Society's Annual  
Christmas meeting  
Will be on Monday, December 6  
At the Garth Homer Center  
At 6:30 p.m.*

*Members A to M, please bring a savory  
Or a salad  
Members N to Z please bring  
A dessert*

*The Club will provide a cooked ham,  
Punch, serviettes,  
Tea and coffee*

*Please bring your own dishes, cutlery and  
cups*

*Raffle donations of crafts and plants would be  
much appreciated, and proceeds  
Will be donated to the Mustard Seed food  
bank.*

## VICTORIA RHODODENDRON SOCIETY BOARD

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Putting the peat moss in a container and pouring boiling water over it is the best way of moistening it; otherwise, peat moss is very difficult to dampen. Don uses bottom heat, and covers the container with saran wrap to hold in moisture, and the seeds usually germinate....

Eventually the plants are put into bigger pots with a sand, peat, and soil mix. But each plant when put into its pot must have its label and name!

Dean is interested in making his own hybrids, trying to get a really fine yellow hybrid. He often uses wardii and caloxanthum as parents. One of his latest hybrids is wardii crossed with Cream Glory.

Joe Harvey spoke to us about the proper scientific naming of seeds. He had some packets of seeds for sale. Once grown, they could produce rhododendrons with indumentum on the bottom and the top of the leaves. Hybrids like R. "Golfer" have these features.

Calvin, on his computer, was able to bring up three sites that feature rhododendrons. The first site was ARS ([www.rhododendron.org](http://www.rhododendron.org)). It was not complete, for many new plants have been discovered and there are many new hybrids. The website is out of date, but it is being worked on.

The second website was Greer Garden ([www.greergardens.com](http://www.greergardens.com)). Calvin used a new hybrid, R. "Frosted Plum", to see if it was findable on the Greer website. It was.

However, the third website ([www.hirsutum.info](http://www.hirsutum.info)) was the most complete and versatile site. There are individual sections for each letter of the alphabet, and hundreds of rhodos listed in each section. Many have photographs (like "Frosted Plum"). Rhododendron growers submit the photos, which are checked to be sure the plant has been correctly identified.

Gardeners can register their own gardens, and

list their plants and where they are located in the garden,. They can also add photographs. Once your garden is registered, although you can look over the work of other gardeners, you cannot add to or change any detail of their gardens. Calvin has registered his home garden and Glendale Gardens. Hirsutum, based in Belgium, was initiated by a group of enthusiasts in the Netherlands and headed by Herman van Ree, who is very dedicated to the site.

## Rhododendron Tips

By Bill McMillan

Leaves on my rhododendrons are turning yellow – is it sick? The answer might be either yes or no depending on where the yellowed leaves are located. In the photo, *R. rubiginosum* has some bright yellow leaves but the new growth leaves are green and healthy looking. This is a normal development.

Subsection hymenanthes and rhododendron plants are generally evergreen but they do drop leaves that are 2 to 4 years old. Often the older leaves turn yellow or other colors before they drop off. Different plants hold their old leaves for shorter or longer periods of time. With the focus now of hybridizers to produce compact plants, they are also breeding for longer leaf retention so the plants are very leafy for best appearance.

At the other end of the scale, if the new growth is yellowed, then there is a problem. If the plant is in full sun it may simply be sun bleaching but it could also be a sign of nutrient deficiency. Check to be sure the pH is between 4.5 and 6 because if the soil is too alkaline the plant might not be able to take up nutrients that may actually be at adequate levels. If the veins are green in the yellowed leaves, it is termed chlorosis and indicates either manganese or iron deficiency. If pH is too high, try adding iron sulphate or granu-

lated sulphur to lower it. If the pH is okay, try adding fertilizer like 10-8-6 with micro-nutrients and see if that solves the yellowing.



*R. rubiginosum* normal yellowing of older leaves before they drop.

## The Sweet Pain of Gardening

by Margaret de Weese, reprinted from the December 2002 issue of the Newsletter

I assure you I most certainly am not suffering from Armillaria but the ground surrounding the *Acer macrophyllum* is studded with golden mushrooms, and at night I am quite sure they glow palpably. However, since I haven't ventured out so late to see, I cannot vouch for the glow-in-the-dark description. I couldn't find any rhizomorphs so instead, I planted the peach tree in the large hole left by the hastily departing Dora (*Amateis*); rhododendrons pale visibly when golden mushrooms creep inexorably towards them. The peach tree, on its third move, looks happy with its sunny location and its protective caging.

An itchy two point buck came through last month, uprooted two good size rhododendrons while trying to relieve that itch, and managed by the fourth try on the stem bark of *R. arboreum* var. *cinnamomeum*. The fastest grower in my garden is stucco wire, reaching heights of five feet in an hour. The

five foot arboreum now reaches six inches and is positively lush with leaves.

While I try not to be sexist, I have observed that men like things that move while women like to move things. I like to move plants. Each of my plants must learn not to set down permanent roots. Rhododendrons seem to like this change of scene. They are shallow rooted and easy to move and that change to a new hole with fresh soil, filled with water for dehydrated foliage, does wonders both for me and for the plant. Leaves perk up in gratitude whilst I contemplate the next move. Moving plants relieves the urge to move furniture but causes havoc for garden map makers.

Weevils stand a good chance in my garden. I have bought that safe natural way of weevil control... a packet of nematodes for \$19. Now as I can't see them, I trust they are in that packet as I am watering that effective control into the right places. However the weevils have the word out that if they go far enough down in the soil, that soon to be moved rootball with its teeming nematodes will be replaced with another virtually unchewed and nematode free banquet.

Labels pose a problem. The wooden ones rot, the metal ties fatigue, but the misspelled ones last forever and are prominently displayed.

Colour in my garden is limited to green and brown...I would like this to mean shiny green and furry brown indumentum...but in fact, you probably know what I mean. Ken Cox has stated that the unsightly rhododendron should be turfed. Although he didn't state it in those words, I wonder what constitutes shapely. Those rhododendrons which have the prime real estate with pond view must have "thin" as an attribute so visitors can see the frogs and the turtles, but this doesn't seem to be a problem.

Gardening is not for the weak. It is a state of mind over matter; no matter how many problems multiply in the garden, the mind subtracts the multiplication and adds up the soul benefit.

### **DAVE DOUGAN BIOGRAPHY**

#### **"Flower Child Logger", \$15 each**

Born into the Dougan family of the Cowichan Valley, Dave Dougan went on to run Dougan Logging, become president of Rhododendron Societies on Vancouver Island, create the Eagles View Estates on the Malahat and is a friend to many.

Dave Dougan was also a ARS Silver medal winner in 2000.

For a copy of "Flower Child Logger", please contact author and grand-daughter Alison Hyatt at: 2341 Dowler Pl,

Victoria, B.C. V8T 4H5,  
250-588-9224 alisonhyatt@gmail.com

### *CRAFTS AND PLANTS WANTED FOR OUR CHRISTMAS POT-LUCK DINNER RAFFLE!!!*

*An important part of our Festive Potluck dinner, our raffle, is on the tables in the center of the hall. Tables are covered with donations of crafts and plants. All proceeds will go to the Mustard Seed Food Bank.*

### **WHAT'S NEW WITH THE BOARD**

As well as making changes to our Show and Sale, members of the board have been busy with many new projects:



*Merry Christmas  
and  
A Happy New Year  
2011!*

Calvin Parsons and Bill McMillan have been working on our Website. Calvin also made business cards for the VRS which will be useful to hand out to guests at the meetings, or for new members, or to garden centers and anyone interested in rhododendrons.

Carolyn Marquardt greets guests to our meetings, and makes sure they wear a name tag. Peter Barriscale took Bill McMillan's photos of R. "Transit Gold" and reworked and brightened up the yellow tone in our logo. The Logo is now on the Website, and on the navy polar fleece vests and jackets Jacqueline Bradbury ordered. These are available for sale.

The Propagation Group set up a very successful Work Shop on October 30. A report on the Work Shop will be in January's Newsletter.

The speakers' committee of Norma Senn, Bill McMillan and Carol Dancer have set up several 10 minute speakers as well as our main speakers until May.

An important reason for changing our show's location is so we can attract new members. Hillside Mall on a Saturday in Spring, and on a date close to Mother's Day, is a very busy place. Shoppers will be able to see beautiful

rhododendron trusses up close, and smell the fragrance many of them have.

In future newsletters we will keep you let you know what changes to the show format will be needed..

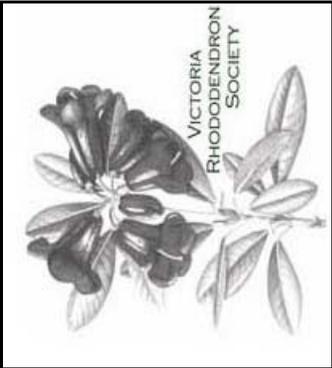
**CHANGES IN THE TIMING OF OUR SHOW AND SALE**

by Lois Blackmore

This year we are having a different format for our yearly show and sale. It is based on church rental costs as well as timing of our show. The third weekend in April is Easter and the church has a Good Friday service. The next weekend, April 30/May 1 is the UVic sale, but allows those involved in the UVic Sale to enter their trusses on the Friday night, go the show on April 30, and still participate in the university sale on the Saturday and Sunday.

Setting up tables is handled by the Hillside Mall staff.

If we have our sale on May 7 at Abkhazi Gardens, there is no rental cost. We donate 10% of our sales to the garden. This is the only cost to running our show this year



Key to Symbols



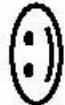
General Meetings Garth Homer Centre, 811 Darwin Street Saanich



VRS Show Hillside Mall April 30 Sale Abkhazi Garden May 7



Propagation Group Meetings Contact Ken Webb to be added to the E-mail list



Summer Picnic See May Newsletter for location and details



ARS Convention

Monday Statutory holidays

December 2010

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Pileated Woodpecker



Moss deer—more welcome than a real one!

Photos by Susan Lightburn