

# The Victoria Rhododendron Society

## *Newsletter*



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

June 2011 Thirty-First Year of Publication

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**June PICNIC**  
**12 P.M. SUNDAY, JUNE 26. 2011**  
**At Ann and Tom Widdowson's garden**  
**4635 West Saanich Road,**  
**Northwest of the Wilkinson Road/ West Saanich Road intersection**

### **VRS PICNIC JUNE 26**

**A picnic in a lovely garden on a summer day is not to be missed!**

**Our June picnic will be held at the Widdowsons' (the address above) on June 26 at noon. There is parking for about 20 cars on the lawn of the Widdowson property. Extra parking is available on the opposite side of West Saanich Road. The side nearest the house is a bike lane.**

**You are asked to bring a wrapped savory, salad or dessert. Tags labeling eggs, dairy, nuts or flour for people with allergies will be appreciated.**

**A fruit punch, tea and coffee are provided.**

**Lunch will be served about 1 p.m. and will feature barbequed salmon grilled to perfection by our volunteer**

### **In This Issue**

- **Show and sale report** pgs. 2-4
- **May's meeting, Deer Spray and Glendale Garden** pg. 5
- **Trophies won at the Show 2011** pg. 6

**chefs.**

**Please bring your own cutlery, plates and mugs and don't forget chairs to sit on!**

**Please donate a rhododendron, companion plant or other plant for our free raffle if you can. Almost every year each person receives at least one plant.**

**Trophies from May's Show will be presented to the winners.**

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## REPORT ON THE VRS SHOW AND SALE, APRIL 30 AND MAY 7

By Lois Blackmore, Show Chair

Our show and sale took on a different format this year, having the show first, followed by the sale one week later. The rationale for changing the format was due to ever increasing costs at the church and to get more exposure and increase public awareness of our society. The show exposed much more of the public to the genus rhododendron than in previous shows and our costs were held to a minimum.

Our show was held at the Hillside Centre on



*The Hillside Centre beautified by hundreds of rhododendron blooms*

Saturday, April 30, 2011. The hours for the show were from 9:30 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. We were able to set up on the previous evening. Thanks go to Ann and Tom Widdowson, Moe and Johanna Massa, Norma Senn, Anne Allen, Ian Duncan, Heather Dickman, Norma Buckley and Roy Blackmore.

The judging took place early Saturday morning starting at 7:00 a.m. Thank you to Dave Mackas, Burns Morrison, Calvin Parsons, Bill McMillan, Betty Gordon, Bill Gordon, Norma Senn and Alan Murray for doing an out-

*(Continued on page 3)*

standing job. Another thank you goes to the clerks who assisted the judges in making their job easier and for the judging to run so smoothly. Clerks this year were Keiko Alkire, Ann Widdowson, Linda Gilmore, Don Whittle, Ellen Wellborn, Ev Van Eerden, Karen Burns, Norma Buckley, Stephen



*Three judges, Alan Murray, Norma Senn and Betty Gordon checking the merits of a rhododendron truss with great care.*

and Marjorie Brice, Bonnie Moro and Carolyn Marquardt. A special thanks to Anne Allen, Ian Duncan and Karen Burns for looking after all the awards and organizing them into categories. On the day of the show, there was some confusion as the mall closes at 5:30 and the show was advertised as closing at 6:00.

This was the first time we asked members to bring their trusses show ready and many were able to do just that. Preparing the trusses at



*The judges at work!*

home greatly helped with the set up of the show and the cooperation by members in doing this was greatly appreciated. There was much interest from the public as we usually get thirty to forty people's choice entries. This year there were one hundred and seventeen entries. Many people asked questions and showed an interest in our display and the volunteers at the mall interacted with the public in a very positive way. Because of the very late and exceptionally cold spring, we did not have as many varieties of trusses as usual. However, the Centre looked amazingly beautiful.

Our sale was held on Saturday, May 7, 2011 at Abkhazi Gardens from 9:00 a.m. until noon. We were only able to get two nurseries to sell their plants this year. The propagating group did not have any rhododendrons to sell as many members were growing plants for the Nanaimo Conference next fall. Only two members were able to sell plants this year. We had the additional welcome of the bird house sales as well. We are having increasing difficulty gaining new sellers as many will not travel to Victoria for our sale. The cost of having the sale at Abkhazi Gardens was ten per cent of our sale profit going to the Gardens, thus our profit this year was ten percent of sales, as we receive twenty percent of sales



*The Sale at Abkhazi Gardens*

from the growers. Thus from total sales of \$3,300, we received \$330.00. We are not able to continue functioning in this way and the executive is looking at buying our own plants to sell. We will be able to increase our profit to somewhere between 40 and 50 percent if we buy our own plants.

Abkhazi Gardens were very cooperative and we were able to set up on the previous evening, with many volunteers taking part to help set up tents, bring in plants and generally get the gardens ready for the sale the following morning.

Preparations for the show and sale included advertising in local papers and gardening magazines, photocopying material with Xeroxing and paper cutting, and calling for and organizing volunteers. As well, judges and clerks were asked for their expertise and knowledge of rhododendrons and were in place early on. Peter Barriscale produced a beautiful poster which members distributed to garden centers, libraries and other interested places. As well, we were able to have professional signage donated to the show and sale by Garside Sign and Display Company.

It was decided this year not to have a raffle because we could not get a volunteer to organize, get donations and run the raffle. Instead we had a silent auction that was very successful. Our profit from the silent auction was \$260.12.

Volunteers for the sale included Ken and Madeleine Webb, Tom and Ann Widdowson, Thurston Lacalli, Heather Dickman, Carolyn Marquardt, Archie Brown, Siggie Hedul, Linda Harvey, Joyce Parker, Lorraine Hoy, Carrie George, Calvin Parsons, Gareth Shearman, Roy Blackmore and Lloyd Gilmore. These people took on multiple roles, each contributing to the success of the sale and then contributed to the massive job of clean up. These



*Clerks Anne Allen and Karen Burns record the results*



*The table showing the Trophies*



*Roy Blackmore, Ken and Madeleine Webb, and visitors to our rhodo Show*



*A visitor to our show talks to Moe and Johanna Massa*

folks used their ingenuity and common sense to make the morning go extremely smoothly. A debt of gratitude goes to them. In naming them personally, if I have left anyone out, I apologize profusely.

At the May meeting of our club, the show and sale were thoroughly discussed by those attending the meeting. Both positive and negative thoughts and ideas were contributed to the discussion. As times change, and the demographics of our society change as well, I am looking for actionable ideas for next year's show and sale. Please let me know what your thoughts and ideas are. The ideas need to have costs attached as well because changes must be cost effective. I will continue to be show chair and



*Checking out rhodos for the People's Choice award, including a mother and her two children*

there is a new committee that is going to share this commitment to the club. I have enjoyed very much working with all club members in all aspects of the show and sale, and appreciate their willingness to make everything run smoothly. (Editor's note: a list of the trophy winners for the VRS 2011 Show is on page 8)

I would like to close this Show Report by thanking once more the many volunteers who gave of their time and effort in making the show and sale successful. A special thanks to Madeleine Webb and Carol Dancer for their support.

**GREAT WORK LOIS AND THE KEY SHOW AND SALE VOLUNTEERS!**

### **With thanks to our photographers**

This issue of the VRS Newsletter has been brightened by photography by Anne Allen, Calvin Parsons, and Theresa and Bill McMillan.



*R. yunnanense on display*



*The choice is unanimous! Alan Murray, Bill McMillan, Calvin Parsons, Betty Gordon, Dave Mackas, Norma Senn and Bill Gordon, the judges agree....*



*The People's Choice award went to Keiko Alkire's R. "Marie Starks"*

## **Lois Blackmore's Deer Repellent Spray Recipe**

4 eggs  
2 oz. hot pepper sauce  
1 whole head garlic

Put all in a blender. Add 1 litre of water. Strain really really well. Add 1 more cup of water. Then your spray is ready.  
Good for weeks on your hostas.

## **Help is needed at the Glendale Rhododendron Garden!!**

On Wednesday mornings, volunteers gather at Glendale Gardens on Quayle Road (between Interurban and West Saanich Road) to help in any way they can in a variety of gardens. Parking is in the lot or at angles to the fence along Quayle Road. Or by the poly houses.

The setting is park-like, with all the gardens, bird song from the forest, and calls from the waterfowl in the lake.

In the mid-morning, volunteers get coffee, tea, and cookies in a central area. And we talk!

Our rhododendrons have been growing, and so is the need to dead-head the spent flowers.

If you can spend 2 to 3 hours a week, we would really appreciate your help. Either come to the Rhodo Garden on Wednesday mornings, or contact Bill McMillan at 250-478-3515 or wtmcmillan@telus.net. Thank you!

## **Report on the VRS Monthly meeting on May 9th**

**By Theresa McMillan**

On a sunny/ cloudy/ cool evening, (typical of this year's spring) a large group of Rhodo Society Members met Rhonda Rose at the University of Victoria's Finnerty Gardens for a guided tour. Our club is one of the supporters of the garden, and many people have not seen it recently.

There have been many changes from a few years ago, when deer and rabbits were ongoing problems. But a high fence and swinging gates have helped with the deer, and a well-publicized eradication of the rabbits.



There are extensive beds of companion plants such as wild lilies, lily of the valley, forget-me-nots, and English bluebells. The rhododendrons, aided by damp cool weather, were blooming and in perfect form. After the tour, the group walked from the gardens to the MacLaurin Building for coffee, tea and desserts.

Under Calvin's leadership, we had pictures from the show and sale, followed by a wide-ranging discussion of the merits and problems with the new Show and Sale locations along with many suggestions for improvements next year.

## VRS SHOW AWARD WINNERS 2011

de Rothschild Challenge Trophy	The best rhododendron entry in the show	Norma Senn	R. "Razorbill"
George Fraser Memorial Trophy	Best Vancouver Island hybrid	Bill McMillan	R. Yak "Exbury" x pachysanthum
Mary's Memorial Cup	Best rhododendron companion plant	Johanna and Moe Massa	osmanthus
Jim Calder Trophy	Best species truss or spray	Dean Goard	R. davidsonianum "Ruth Lyons"
Mary Henderson Memorial Trophy	Best hybrid rhododendron truss or spray	Anne Allen	R. "Bob's Blue"
Angus and Mary Boyd Trophy	Best entry by a novice	Allison Hawkins	R. "Noyo Brave"
Alec McCarter Bowl	The best northwest hybrid	Bill McMillan	R. "Transit Gold"
Ken and Madeleine Webb Trophy	"The People's Choice" voted by attendees at the show	Keiko Alkire	R. "Marie Starks"
The Gibson Memorial Trophy	The exhibitors accumulating the most points	Moe and Johanna Massa	High aggregate
Herman and Hella Vaartnou	The best rhododendron truss or spray that is fragrant	not awarded	
Jean and Norm Todd Trophy	The best lepidote species grown in a container	not awarded	