

VICTORIA RHODODENDRON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2021

Our purpose is
to promote and
educate the
public about the
GENUS
rhododendron

Victoria Rhododendron Society



www.victoriarhodo.ca

Meetings are held in the Couvelier Center
September through May
on the grounds of the HCP Gardens
505 Quayle Road,
Victoria, B. C.

Meetings begin at 7:30 pm. with
a social gathering afterwards

VISITORS WELCOMED

www.victoriarhodo.ca

CONTACT
4821 TOWNSEND
ROAD
VICTORIA, B. C.



PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

Hello to all Victoria Rhododendron Society members!

The fall season is upon us. It is so nice to see the amount of rain falling on our gardens after a summer of sunshine and heat. I am certain it is helpful to the plants we love so dearly, but unfortunately, the rain also helps the weeds. We are still waiting for some of the heat damaged rhododendrons to sport new leaves. It may be that replacement will be needed in the spring, but only time will tell. Many of the Rhododendrons are showing swelling flower buds ready to greet us in the spring. A few Elizabeth type plants gave us fall flowers, reminding us that despite the heat of the summer, there will be still be flowers in the spring.

Membership fees are \$35, for a full membership , \$25 for a local membership, and \$10 if one belongs to another ARS Chapter. One can pay by E-transfer at a cost of \$1.50. Please refer to Calvin's email about the E-transfer procedure. Those wishing to pay by cheque, please send cheques payable to VicRS to Bill Gordon at 4821 Townsend Road, Victoria B.C. V8Z 5P2.

I wish everyone a most enjoyable November, with continuing good health and an enjoyable fall garden. My November duties will be planting my rhododendron crosses and working on my Gingerbread House for the Gingerbread Showcase for the Habitat for Humanity display at the Parkside Hotel and Spa, 810 Humboldt Street, Victoria B. C. The 2021 theme is The Future of the Home. The display is open to the public from November 20 until January 2, 2022.

The plants at the Norm Todd Propagating Compound are growing well and should be ready for sale in a year or two.

In other news, a new site for a patio display garden has been selected and approved by the board at the HCP. As one enters the grounds, it is to the left of the Couvelier Center and has an amazing view across the entire lower garden.

After a board discussion, it was decided to cancel the proposed brunch/lunch for December because of a very low response. January meetings have been poorly attended mostly because of weather conditions. This year the December and January meetings will be ZOOM only attendance. Our plan is to have in-attendance meetings for February onwards with the COVID conditions improving.

NOTES FROM THE BOARD



Board Meeting October 12, 2021

Membership fees for the 2022 season will remain as last year. Full membership \$35...Local membership \$25...from another district \$10.

Please send your membership fees to
Bill Gordon at 4821 Townsend Drive, Victoria V8Z 5P2
E-transfer is being explored by Bill Gordon and Calvin
[It is now available.](#)

The site at the HCP for a patio demonstration garden is being explored
[The site is now chosen.](#)

The Jim Barlup cuttings being sent to
Denmark is on hold because of agricultural rules.

ZOOM capabilities may soon be upgraded.

A discussion of a Christmas luncheon is being explored.
[It is now cancelled.](#)

Database software is going to be purchased to keep information on the sites at HCP and the Barlup Legacy Garden at a cost of \$400. Calvin will be responsible for this project.

\$500 was spent purchasing Paul Wurz plants. Calvin and Lois each contributed another \$280. The club will reimburse these expenses to these members as the sales from cuttings of these will eventually bring in over \$2000 to the VicRS.

At least until 2022, all VicRS meetings will be held via ZOOM

There is a link on YouTube called "The Steel Lecture 2021"
It is a history of Exbury Gardens presented by Lionel de Rothschild and Thomas Clarke, head gardener at Exbury

“SINGAPORE RHODODENDRON” (*Melastoma Malabathricum*)

(nparks.gov.g)

The Singapore (Indian, Straits) Rhododendron is a small shrub or tree growing up to 5 meters tall. Its stalked leaves are lance-shaped, with three prominent veins - one central and two marginal. The flowers are up to 8cm wide with petals ranging from light to dark magenta-pink and sometimes white.



It grows naturally in lowlands and on mountains up to 3000 meters. The fruit, leaves and seeds are edible. The fruit is eaten by birds, squirrels and monkeys and the flowers attracts a large number of native bees. The young leaves are eaten raw or cooked and have a sour taste.



‘Melastoma means ‘black mouth’ in Greek, a reference to the dark-colored pulp.

Medicinal purposes include bark for toothache and dysentery; leaves for diarrhea, dysentery, indigestion, stomach ache, and sores from insect bites. The powdered leaves and roots are used for hemorrhoids and open wounds. A wash of the leaves relieves ulcers and is used to prevent scarring from small pox.

Dividing Perennials Cheat Sheet

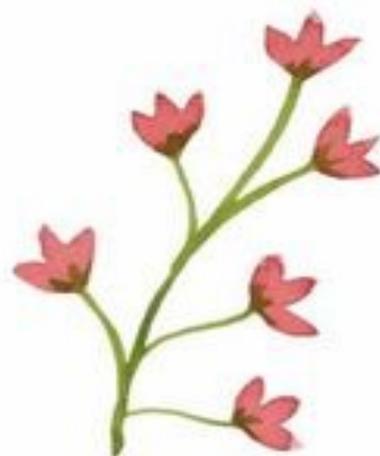
Divide in Late Winter or Spring

Easy - just pull apart

Black-eyed Susan
Coneflower
Perennial Geranium
Coreopsis
Beebalm
Forget-me-not

Harder - needs a sharp knife

Grasses
Ferns
Hosta
Daylily



Divide in Summer or Early Fall

Iris
Dahlias
Allium
Peonies

Don't Divide - Use a different Method of Propagation

Oriental Poppies (gather seed)
Columbine (gather seed)
Lavender (cuttings or layering)
Russian Sage (cuttings or layering)

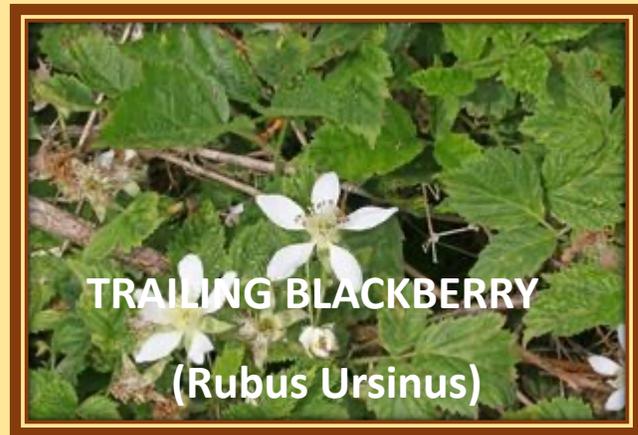


PROBLEMS OF A RHODODENDRON HOBBYIST PLANT PESTS

Ideas from January 15, 1969 edition of the ARS Bulletin
Written by George D. Grace



Although not named in order of importance, weeds and vines are certainly always at hand. As Victoria and Vancouver Island are noted as rhododendron havens for growing conditions, the hundreds and thousands of seeds scatter around like swarms of locusts whenever the wind blows in seeding season.



Trailing blackberry (*Rubus Ursinus*) is a native perennial with trailing or climbing stems armed with tiny, slender hooked spines. It is often found in fairly open to dense woods. It is a deciduous plant and very hard to eliminate once it is established. It is the number one pest in our garden. It is often found intertwined with the Himalayan Blackberry (*Rubus Procerus*).

CRABGRASS VS. QUACKGRASS

DIFFERENCES | SIMILARITIES

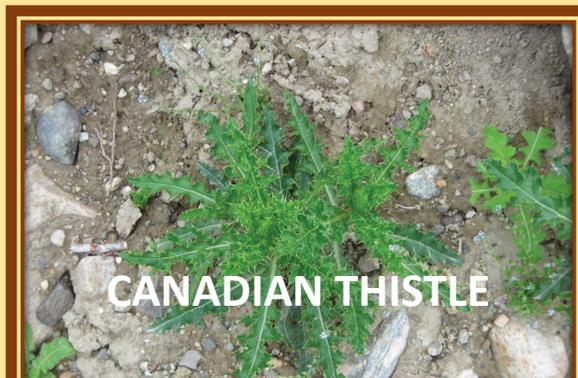
	
CRABGRASS LEAVES ARE FAIRLY BROAD COMPARED TO QUACKGRASS. SOME TYPES ARE HAIRY.	QUACKGRASS LEAVES ARE FAIRLY NARROW AND SMOOTH COMPARED TO THOSE OF CRABGRASS.
	
CRABGRASS HAS SHALLOW CRAB-LIKE ROOTS THAT ARE EASIER TO UPROOT.	QUACKGRASS ROOTS ARE MAINLY RHIZOMES FROM WHICH SHOOTS SPROUT.

A further pest in our rhododendron gardens may be grasses. Crab grass leaves grow independently from the stem. Quack grass leaves grow from the center outwards forming a circular appearance. The main difference between the grasses is that crab grass is an annual that grows from seed during the warm season. Quack grass is a widespread and serious weed in British Columbia and across Canada. It spreads both by underground rhizomes and seed. It is thought to have originated in Europe and Western Asia and come to North America through cereal crops. It is now found throughout Canada and the Northwest Territories. This grass now infests 37 crops in 65 countries.





Another pest in our rhododendron gardens is the Canadian thistle. It spreads from seeds or vegetative buds in its root system. The horizontal roots may extend 15 feet or more and the vertical roots may grow 6 to 15 feet. If left unchecked, a single Canadian thistle plant can turn into a patch containing thousands of plants. In order to control this weed, one must injure and exhaust its root system. One must do this repeatedly through multiple seasons.



CANADIAN THISTLE



(Cirsium adverse)

Common chickweed is another pest for our island gardeners. It grows erect to prostrate and is often mat-like in appearance. This plant blooms from February to September but under favorable conditions flowering can take place all year round. Common chickweed reproduces mostly from seed, but sometimes it reproduces by creeping stems that root from stem nodes.



**HORSETAIL
(equisetum arvense)**

Horsetail is an invasive, deep rooted perennial weed that spreads quickly to form a dense carpet of foliage, crowding out other plant material. The creeping rhizomes of the pernicious plant may go down as deep as 7 feet. Removing horsetail by hand is difficult. It is best to remove shoots as soon as they appear in the spring. One can reduce infestation if shoots are pulled out over several years.



**COMMON CHICKWEED
(Stellaria media)**

COLORFUL ADDITIONS TO YOUR EARLY BLOOMING RHODODENDRONS

Have you ever thought about adding an extra “POP” of color under your early blooming rhododendrons to add interest and to draw your eye to enjoy spring just a bit more, especially with our society having been shut down over the past 18 months? My thinking is that this could be our defiance to the virus and to remember how we managed through almost two winters of discontent.



SHAMROCK



CREAM BEAUTY



PJM



BARR'S PURPLE



CHRISTMAS CHEER



FIREFLY



CILPINENSE



JEANNE D'ARC

THESE FLOWERS ARE LIKELY TO CLIMB UP THE HIMALAYAS AS TEMPERATURES RISE

Sahana Ghosh of Mongabay News and Inspiration



Rhododendron Arboreum

“Scarlet blossoms of the rhododendron tree (*Rhododendron arboreum*) pop out and light up the rugged brown, grey, green oak and deodar-draped canvas of the western Himalayas as spring gets ready to take over”.

“In Uttarakhand, where the species is the state tree and supports the local economy, reports of early flowering of *R. arboreum* (locally called buransh) have elicited concerns over the sensitivity and responses to temperature and rainfall (snow) changes in the warming Himalayas.”



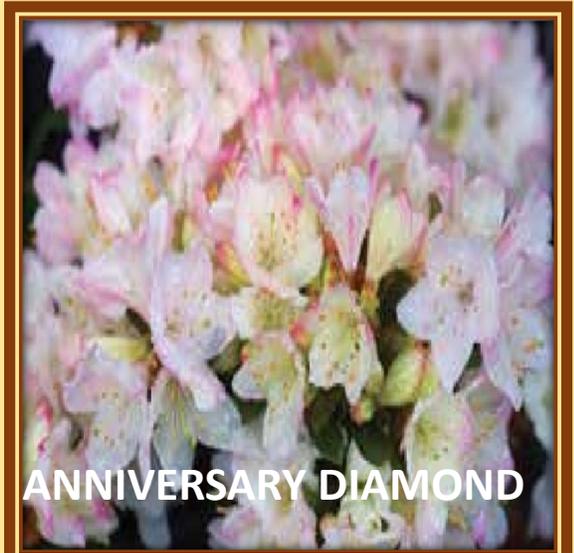
*Prediction of upslope movement of
Rhododendron arboreum in Western
Himalaya
March 10 2020*

*Sri N. S. Veera, Rajendra M. Panda, Mukunda D. Behera,
Shailendra Goel, Partha S. Roy, Saroj K. Barik*

Adding to the growing discourse on climate sensitivity of species, and their ability to keep pace with change, a recent study predicted that *R. arboreum* is likely to move to higher elevations to cope with climate change. Currently, it grows at an altitude of 1500- 3300 meters. “In extreme climate change, a raised temperature condition could favor *R. arboreum* expanding its distribution above 4500 meters by 2070.”

The tree is woven into the region’s local culture, traditional medicine and supports the economy. Local villages churn out juice, jam and chutneys derived from the flowers. Currently 10-20 % of households are in the harvest and trade of buransh flowers. This supplements the tourism industry in the Garhwal mountains, where walking trails bring travelers closer to this species.

HONORING THE TALENTS OF HAROLD GREER



**THANK
YOU
HAROLD
FOR
EVERYTHING
YOU
DID
FOR
THE
WORLD
OF
RHODODENDRONS**

**YOU
WILL
BE
MISSED**

**REST
IN
PEACE**





RODODENDRON HAROLD GREER

Shortly before his untimely death, Harold created a rhododendron named for himself. It is a cross between Very Berry and Horizon Monarch. The plant was given to Mike and Maria Stewart.

Thank you to Steve McCormack for sharing this photo

AZALEAS FOR YOUR LANDSCAPE

Because azaleas have been selectively bred for centuries, there are thousands of cultivars, derived from hundreds of species found throughout North America. Many of the crucial parent species are natives of western China. Extensive hybridization means new varieties appear every year, many suitable for the northern climates.

The Rhododendrons genus comprises both azaleas and rhododendrons. The technical difference is found in the structure of the flowers. Rhododendron flowers have ten stamens, while azaleas have five. Azaleas have smaller leaves and branches and are often deciduous, while rhododendrons have larger leaves and are usually evergreen.

Hardy azaleas for Victoria gardens.



Fragrant and exceptionally hardy, floriferous, very reliable and flamboyant, resistant to mildew



Noted for its sweetly scented double flower, blooming in late spring or early summer



Prized for its late showy white flowers and marvelous fragrance



Fragrant and exceptionally cold hardy, opening in late spring to early summer before the leaves unfurl with trusses of eight luminous, trumpet-shaped flowers and with leaves that turn maroon in the fall



Compact, evergreen re-blooming azalea, cold hardy, sun tolerant and a repeat bloomer

IN PROPAGATING NEWS...

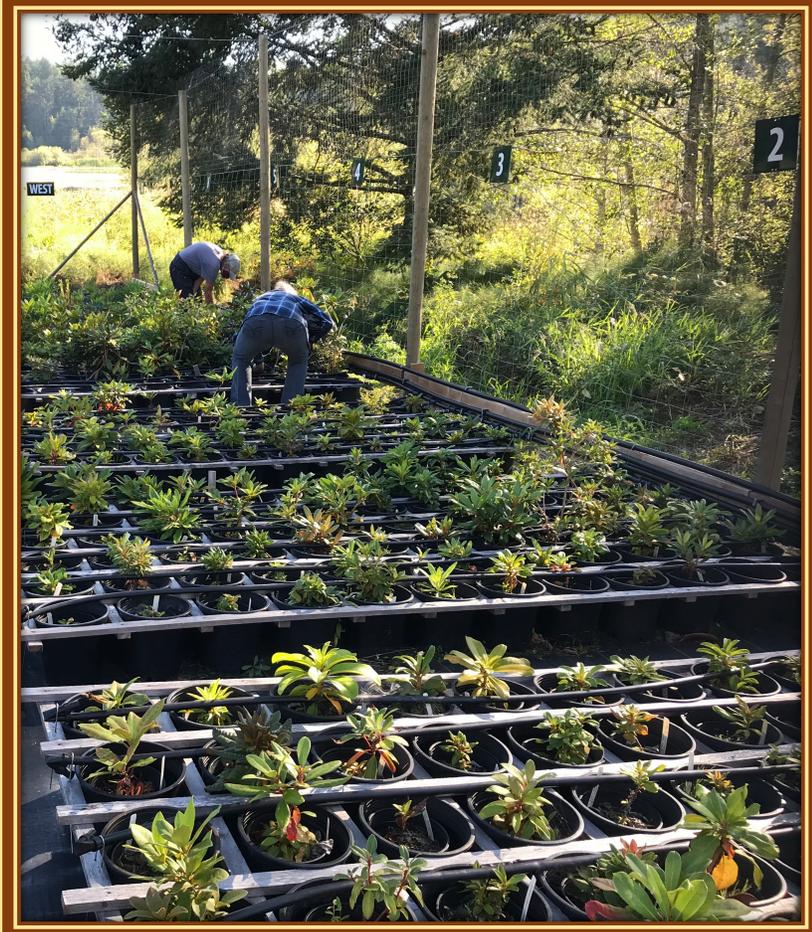


Jeda x *R. sanguianum* ssp. haemalum

(Jeda x *R. sanguianum* ssp. haemalum) ...grown from cuttings by Lloyd



Lloyd's unnamed Jim Barlup cuttings grown from seed



Cuttings of named and unnamed crosses in the Norm Todd Propagation Center

RHODODENDRON OF THE MONTH



DECORUM

Rhododendron decorum is native to China, Myanmar and Laos aka as (Great White Rhododendron). Decorum is a very fragrant, large, evergreen small tree with attractive spring flowers, decorative bark and handsome dark green leaves. It blooms heavily in mid to late spring. Rhododendron Decorum has loose trusses of 7-12 large, strongly scented, funnel shaped, white or pink-tinged flowers with a yellowish blotch



The foliage of elliptical, leathery leaves usually emerges with bronze shades and remains handsome all year. It is easy to grow, hardy and tolerant of sun, warm dry conditions and neutral pH soils. This rhododendron received the prestigious Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.



OUR NOVEMBER SPEAKER



Dick Cavender is our speaker for our November meeting. Dick is the owner and operator of Red's Rhodies, a nursery specializing in *Rhododendron occidentale*.

His love of this rhododendron began on a road trip along the Oregon coast with his wife Karen. As they were driving, they saw a flowering shrub growing by the side of the road. They discovered that this white, fragrant, clove-scented shrub was *Rhododendron Occidentale*. Thus began a half century love of this particular rhododendron.

Thus, Red's Rhodies became a hobby that grew out of control. His nursery now grows some 30 to 40 selected clones of *Rhododendron occidentale*. As well, he has carried on with a long term hybridizing program to develop a bigger and better form of *R. occidentale*.

VICTORIA RHODODENRON SOCIETY MEETING

NOVEMBER 1, 2021

7:15 pm Vancouver

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81635846531?pwd=QkJjY1NEZ3RPdVBHTTByOVFITXk2Zz09>

Meeting ID: 816 3584 6531

Passcode: 512511



SEVEN BEST RHODODENDRON FERTILIZERS IN CANADA

(Best products Canada.com - Analyzing the top online stores in Canada)

For the most part rhododendrons and azaleas are low maintenance plants that are praised for their spectacular clusters of blossoms and beautiful green leaves. As an added bonus, most rhododendrons hold their leaves for one or two years and provide a spectacular density in many gardens. Although they are light feeders, adding fertilizer results in healthy plants and more robust blooms.



DR. EARTH #1

Misapply Certified
No GMO, chicken manure, or Bio solids
Rated 9.8



JOBE'S ORGANICS #3

Easy pour bags
5-4-3
4lb and 16 lb. bags
Contains Jobe's Biozome
Certified organic
Fast acting
Rated 9.7



JOBE'S ORGANICS #2

6-1-1
10oz. Box makes 30 gallons
Contains Jobe's Biozome, and that breaks down material for faster results
Rated 9.8



MIRACLE-GRO 15-5-10 #6

Feed once per season
Contains natural ingredients
Continuous feeding of essential nutrients



REFERTILIZER BLOOM 5-30-20 #4

100 % approval on Amazon reviews



LUDICROUS ROOTS #7

1-2 scoops per 10 litres of water
Designed to give plants a strong start
Roots focused
Contains organic sea kelp



EPSOMA CO. HT18 JOBÉ'S #5

Long-lasting, slow release
Enhanced with bio-tone beneficial microbes
100% natural organics
4-3-4
18 lb.
Won't burn or leach away

HOW TO TEST SOIL PH WITHOUT A TEST KIT



Most plants have a preference for the degree of acidity in the soil which is measured by a PH scale. While hawthorn, lilac and lavender prefer a more alkaline soil, azaleas, rhododendrons and camellias much prefer an acidic soil. A simple home test will give you a “ballpark” idea if your soil is acidic or alkaline.

- . Working time 15 minutes
- . Material cost \$0 to \$5
- . Garden Trowel
- . 2 small plastic containers
- . White vinegar
- . Baking Soda



To test for alkalinity

Add ½ cup water to soil sample
 Add ½ cup vinegar
 If soil shows a visible bubbling or fizzy action, the more action one sees, the higher the pH.

To test for acidity



**Amend
 the
 soil
 if necessary**



To raise the **alkalinity** of the soil, add wood ashes, agricultural lime.

To make the soil more **acidic**, add bark mulch, compost or cottonseed meal.



Scoop another soil sample into a fresh container
 Add ½ cup water and mix
 Then add 1/2cup baking soda
 If the soil bubbles or fizzes, the soil is acidic.

Deer-resistant Plants for Butterflies and Hummingbirds



SCARLET BEE BALM...Noted for its large flowers, Beebalm is a clumping perennial that attracts streams of butterflies, hummingbirds and other beneficial pollinators.

JOE PYE WEED... This tall perennial prefers moist soil where it can stretch up to 9 feet high. The pink-purple blossoms smell faintly of vanilla and bloom well into the fall, bringing the last butterflies to your yard.

VERBENA ON A STICK ... (AKA TALL VERBENA) Verbena on a Stick can be grown from seed and blooms the first year. The tall stems are topped with clusters of rosy-purple flowers. It is the host plant for the Common Buckeye butterfly. It is hardy in zones 7-10 and is vigorous and drought tolerant.

LANTANA... "MISS HUFF" The most cold-hardy lantana, surviving as low as 0 degrees F. Its clusters of nectar-filled blooms make it a magnet for pollinators.

BLAZING STAR... LIATRIS The plant blooms from the bottom up, providing nectar for the hummingbirds and as a snack for finches at seed time

ANISE HYSSOP... This is a showy flower with fragrant foliage and of little interest to deer. It is a bee, hummingbird and butterfly magnet.

RUSSIAN SAGE... This plant has fragrant foliage and takes very little care. It is heat and drought tolerant and will fill the garden with lavender-purple flowers that bloom all summer.

COSMOS... Cosmos are easy to grow from seed and easy to maintain. They make a great cut flower and the delicate blooms attract a variety of butterflies.

WILD BERGAMOT... Wild Bergamot is a classic garden perennial with frilly red, pink, purple or white flowers. It is a magnet for honey bees, bumble bees, miner bees and butterflies. It is a 'tough as nails' wild flower.

BUTTERFLY WEED...This plant is a host to Monarch butterflies and the flowers are attractive to many other kinds of butterflies. It tolerates dry soil and prefers plenty of sunshine.

SALVIA...There are many different salvia species that are excellent for butterflies and hummingbirds. Many kinds of bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds are dazzled by its blooms. Most salvias are drought tolerant once established.

CONEFLOWER... This plant is a must for every butterfly garden. They are easy to grow and will attract bees and birds from miles around. They are known to be one of the most attractive plants in helping to establish butterfly populations.

FUN FACTS ABOUT NOVEMBER

DID YOU KNOW?????

November's name has remained unchanged since the Roman Calendar.

The Anglo-Saxons called it "Wind Monath" (Wind Month).

In 1605, on November 5, a group of Roman Catholics plotted to blow up the English Parliament while King James was inside. The plot failed. It is now celebrated as Guy Fawkes Day with countless fireworks and lighting up effigies of Guy Fawkes, one of the conspirators.

Since 1621, the USA celebrates Thanksgiving on the fourth Thursday of November.

The full moon in November is called the Beaver, as that is when the early settlers in the US would set their beaver traps.

The birthstone for November is the topaz. It symbolizes strength and honor. The ancient Greeks believed that the stone had the ability to make a person invisible.

November has one birth flower - the chrysanthemum.

On November 3, 1957 Soviet Russia launched the first spacecraft carrying a live dog named Leika.

The hairy spectacle of "Movember" is celebrated in England, the US, UK and Canada to raise money for charities.

On November 19, 1863, President Lincoln delivered the Gettysburg Address while suffering a minor bout of small pox.

November shares two astrological signs.. Scorpio (November 1-22 and Sagittarius 23-30)



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RHODODENDRON SALE

This is a by-appointment sale for those who are wanting to add new rhododendrons to their garden this fall

Alan and Liz Murray are having a rhododendron sale this fall by appointment only.

Alan has been doing cuttings for some years now and needs more room in his green house.

Contact them at

mistyview@shaw.ca

250 -743 - 9190



IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR A PARTICULAR PLANT, PLEASE CONTACT THEM AS TO THEIR INVENTORY