

# THE VICTORIA RHODODENDRON SOCIETY AUGUST NEWSLETTER

## THE VICTORIA RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

Our purpose is promote  
and educate the public about  
the genus  
RHODODENDRON

We meet at the Couvelier Center on  
the grounds of the  
HCP Gardens  
505 Quayle Road  
Victoria B. C.

Our website:  
[www.victoriarhodo.ca](http://www.victoriarhodo.ca)



Victoria Rhododendron Society





Hello fellow Victoria Rhododendron Society members!

We had about 16 mm. of rain in June and about 13 mm. in July. The rain we had mid-July gave the ground a good soaking, but our rainfall since April has been trending downward. Now we just need to get through August and September before (hopefully), the autumn rains begin. Despite the somewhat changing weather pattern, the rhododendron growth has been good and should bear well for taking cuttings this fall.

The Jim Barlup cuttings rooted by Ken and Madeleine Webb now have a new home in Denmark. After much “fuss and bother” by Agriculture Canada, the I’s were dotted and the T’s were crossed, and were successfully shipped to Denmark and, were gratefully received. This was a huge effort by the members of our club for this gift to occur. Many thanks go to Ken and Madeleine Webb, Frank Buffam, and Lynne and Lyle Ferrie. We thank Agriculture Canada as well for their advice and cooperation.

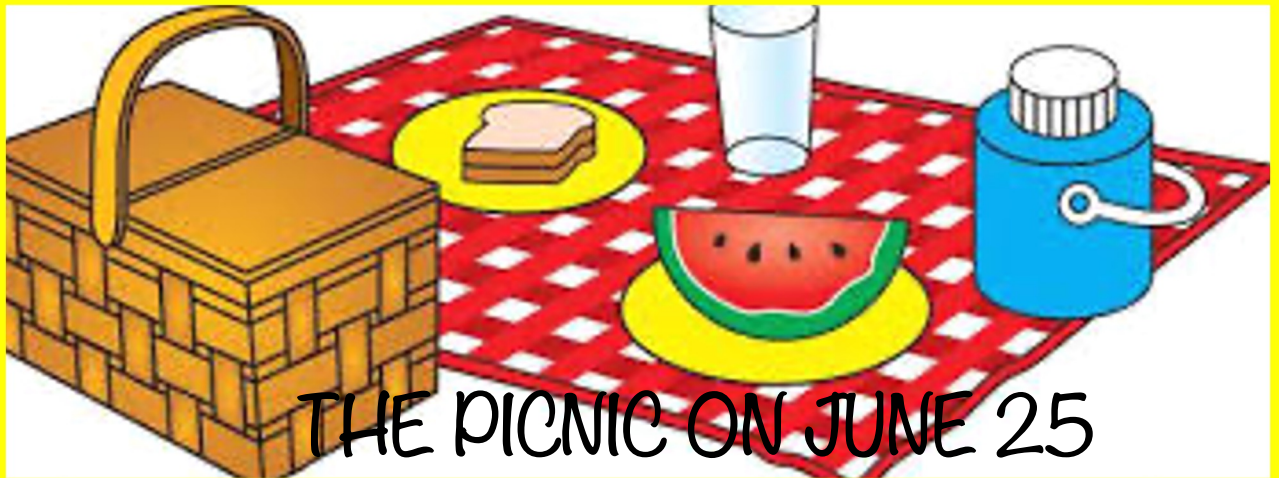
The issue with lack of water for the rhododendrons at the Jim Barlup Legacy Garden has been brought to the attention to the staff of the Esquimalt Township’s garden manager. As all money decisions are made in May at the Township, it was brought to the attention of the Parks Manager. Look for updates in the near future.

The Horticultural Center of the Pacific has a well established rhododendron garden with many rhododendron varieties available for cuttings this fall. Our thanks goes out to Bill McMillan, Calvin Parsons, Ian Duncan, Mike Minkler and Dan Syroid for their volunteer work at the rhododendron garden and the Norm Todd Propagation Center. The shade cloth is up and will provide sun protection for the plants, seedlings and cuttings. The patio container garden is proceeding towards completion and should be ready for the Arts and Music festival in mid-August.

Enjoy the summer flowers, the vegetable gardens as well as friends and family. Achieve your goals, enjoy life’s journey and spread the joy of the rhododendron world to others. See you at our first meeting of the year: Decisions, Discussions and Desserts







## THE PICNIC ON JUNE 25

Our picnic was a huge success this year. It was held on Sunday, June 25 at the home of Ken and Madeleine Webb. There were a total of 55 guests that participated in this annual tradition, a true record attendance since the beginning of the COVID shut down. Delicious entrees, barbecue salmon, fresh shrimp sticks, tasty and unique salads, and scrumptious desserts pleased the palate and, second go rounds were to the delight of the crowd. Lyle was 'head chef', with Dan, Bill, Lynne, Calvin and Mike assisted in the process while other members were "supervising" or carrying the plates of salmon to the tables.

Of course which plants were available for the free draw received much "ooing and awing" and there many discussions were held before the draw. Lloyd and Bill were the "ring masters" per se, making certain that everyone showed their draw ticket number before choosing their prize. As usual with this group of rhododendron lovers, there were enough donated plants that everyone had a second chance at the draw. The weather man cooperated, providing us with a sunny day, and as the afternoon proceeded there was a moving of chairs to less sunny spots. The picnic was a huge success and appreciated by all who were able to attend. Bill McMillan was honored by the HCP and received a certificate of appreciation after 24 years as a volunteer at that garden. This honor was a well deserved recognition.



THANK YOU TO OUR HOSTS  
KEN AND MADELEINE WEBB



# A PLETHORA OF PHOTOS BRING FOND MEMORIES

THANK YOU NADINE MINKLER AND ANNE ALLEN









# CHIEF COOKS AND BOTTLE WASHERS



From  
all  
of  
us



# CHOICES...CHOICES...CHOICES

The plant raffle was a rhodofile's dream







WHAT  
A  
PICNIC  
IT  
WAS





# AND THE WINNER IS ?????





# ACCENTUATING YOUR RHODODENDRON GARDEN

Adapted from Siuslaw News



Gardeners the world over have embraced this marvelous and varied plant by channeling creativity when designing their gardens. Adding companion plants or plants of differing species bring a new interest and provide differing visual elements throughout the year. The rhododendrons when in bloom, immediately catch the eye of the viewer because the color of the trusses is so captivating. They then spend the rest of the year putting out new branches and leaves.

To add to the visual beauty of the garden, one can accent the garden with more leaves. Ornamental grasses that come in yellows, reds, greens provide a variety of heights and sizes. Hostas are another plant that adds interest in the garden, providing beautiful foliage in colors of light blue, striped yellow, green, red-stemmed and white.

Other plants to consider include coral bells, ferns, lewisia, foxgloves, bugleweed, saxifraga, toad lilies and, in very early spring, hellebores are often used as a beginning plant in a rhododendron garden.





# DECISIONS, DISCUSSIONS AND DESSERTS

## MONDAY SEPTEMBER 4

Yum.... Yum.... Yum...



Our first meeting of the upcoming rhododendron year for the VicRS will be quite informal and will provide an opportunity for members to bring forth ideas, suggestions and any other topics of interest that the board has not yet considered. Examples may include how the board makes decisions, what topics of interest that may be considered for speakers, questions about any topic considered as "rhododendron" etc. The idea behind this meeting is to give the board Ideas of interest to our group and to provide advice from members to members on any topic considered "rhododendron" as our experts will be there to answer any questions. There are many experts within our group.....just look at our past history and working together and what we have accomplished. As well, updates on the Jim Barlup Legacy Garden; the Denmark Barlup Garden, the patio garden, the propagating center as well as an update on the "Paired Geese " installation. We ask that members bring a "hand-held" dessert to share and coffee and tea will be provided. Remember to bring your own mug or cup. Weather co-operating, this meeting will be held outside.







## GREAT WINDSOR PARK

With the coronation of King Charles III in May of 2023, Great Windsor Park in London was very much in the news. It is an ancient Royal Park of 5000 acres of forests, grasslands, lakes and gardens. William the Conqueror hunted in the park. Queen Victoria held court here. Within the Windsor Great Park sits the Savill Garden.

The Savill Garden is a 35-acre haven of gardens, woodland and seasonal displays. It was commissioned by George V and created by Eric Savill in 1932. It is a garden for all seasons. Generations of plant-hunters have brought back numerous specimens to be nurtured here. From the Himalayan flowers of the winter beds to the fragrant summer roses, there is always something special to see. The Savill Garden sits within the Great Windsor Park.



## SAVILL GARDEN

Photo by Alex Sandu



# RHODODENDRONS NAMED AFTER THE BRITISH ROYAL FAMILY

QUEEN ELIZABETH



PRINCESS ANNE



KING GEORGE





# SAVILL GARDENS WITHIN GREATWINDSOR PARK





# BEST ROYAL GARDENS TO EXPLORE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM



**BUCKINGHAM PALACE**

This is the most well-known Royal Garden. Most people see it from the front looking down the mall. Here Queen Elizabeth planted a tree for each of her four children. This garden contains a beautiful herbaceous border, a rose garden and a wildflower meadow. The garden is open to the public Monday, Thursday, Friday, To the middle of September. Saturday and Sunday from the middle of July



**KENSINGTON PALACE**

Kensington Palace is the official residence of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge as well as the birthplace of Queen Victoria. The sunken garden, established in 1908, was replanted with exquisite pastel shades in 2017 in honor of Princess Diana. The wildflower meadow includes daisies, poppies and campion to encourage pollinators and other insects.



**HAMPTON COURT PALACE**

No Royal Family resides here, but is known as the palace of King Henry VIII. There are 60 acres of formal gardens and 750 acres of parkland. The most famous part of the grounds is the Palace Maze, created around 1700. In the Home Park, views of deer and different bird species provide glimpses of natural species.





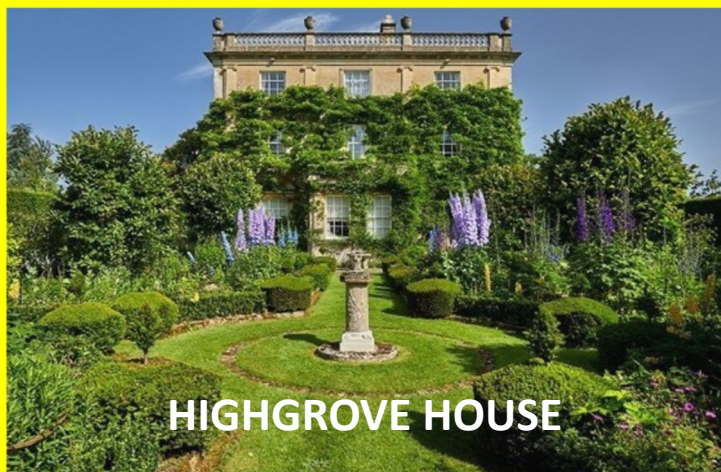
**CASTLE AND GARDEN OF MEY**

This Royal residence is less famous than many others. Queen Elizabeth purchased Castle Mey in Caithness in 1952. She arranged for it to be renovated and the gardens landscaped. This garden is open only three days each year in aid of Scotland's Garden Scheme. Shrub roses, marigolds, pansies, marigolds, dahlias, primulas and nasturtiums are on display those days.



**SANDRINGHAM**

Sandringham was purchased by King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra in 1863. However, the gardens were not created until 1947 by Geoffrey Jellicoe. The gardens are open April - October. The formal garden is best visited in July. The woodland garden is home to rhododendrons, camellias and magnolias. If visiting in May, you will be welcomed when the handkerchief tree is in bloom.



**HIGHGROVE HOUSE**

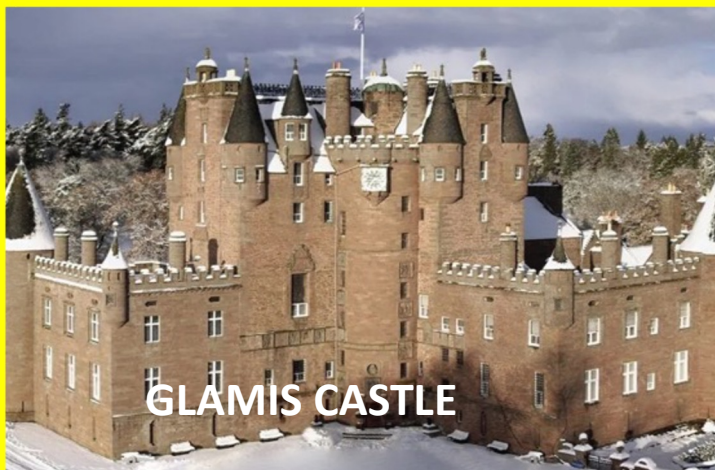
The Prince of Wales was heavily involved in designing the impressive Royal Gardens and is the official home to the royal couple. There is the stumpery with tree stumps, ferns and wooden sculptures; box hedges and delphiniums in the Sundial Garden; colors of Tibet in the Cottage Garden and the wildflower Meadow. One can treat oneself to a Champagne Tour or a Private Tour.





**FROGMORE HOUSE**

This tranquil oasis is located in the home park of Windsor Castle. Frogmore House was originally laid out in the 18 Century. One will encounter picturesque lakes, wooded areas and glades. One can also view the teahouse that was made for Queen Victoria. This garden is open for three Charity Open Days in spring and one can prebook parties of 15 or more people in August.



**GLAMIS CASTLE**

Glamis Castle was the home of the Queen Mother when she was a child. It is situated amidst the stunning landscape of the Angus Glens. The Gardens sparkle with daffodils in the spring; azaleas brightly light up in summer and the autumn leaves turn a multitude of colors in the fall. Do not miss the Italian Garden that was created for Countess Cecelia, the Queen's grandmother.



**BALMORAL CASTLE**

Balmoral Castle was the home of Queen Elizabeth in the summer. It is where she passed away in September 2022. Most impressive are the formal gardens. They cover over three acres of land and a conservatory which displays flowering pot plants throughout the year. The gardens were created under the supervision of Prince Albert who purchased it in 1852. It is a working estate, including grouse moors, forests and farmland.

Adapted from [bloominghaus.com](http://bloominghaus.com)





# IN MEMORIAM

Thank you Frank Buffam

Dr. Norma Senn died in Vancouver on July 17, 2022 after a short illness.

Norma was born in Ottawa where her father was Director of the Plant Research Institute in the federal Department of Agriculture. In 1960 he was enticed to move to the University of Wisconsin to build and operate the world's first Biotron\* and the family followed. Norma earned her undergraduate degree and PhD in Madison, writing her doctoral thesis on calcium and magnesium in beets.

Norma's first job was at the Oak Conservatory in Chicago. This area remains much as it was in her day. It is famous for the many Frank Lloyd Wright houses built in that area and is also known as the birthplace of Ernest Hemingway. When I sent her some photos of the glass houses of the conservancy, Norma remarked that the buildings looked much the same as they did 50 years ago.

Relocating to B.C., Norma initially worked for the University of B.C. as Assistant Professor of Urban Horticulture in the Department of Plant Sciences. Norma then moved to the Ministry of Agriculture as Urban Horticulturist and later, a Nursery Crop Specialist. As part of her job, she set up the first Master Gardener Program in Canada. For many years Norma worked with the Van Dusen Club, lecturing on botany and plant propagation. In the 1980 she was recruited by the University College of the Fraser Valley (now the university of the Fraser Valley) where she spent the remaining 21 years of her career as Program instructor and latterly, director of Agricultural Technology. This involved her in international projects in Viet Nam and Bangladesh. Following retirement in 2008, Norma moved to Victoria.



## **\*BIOTRON**

**A lab building of many rooms separated by high pressure forced air eliminating cross contamination**

**Built at the University of Wisconsin under the leadership of Norma's father with Congressionally approved funds**





**WANNA BEE**



**MI AMOR**



**WEE BEE**

Norma had a long interest in rhododendrons, particularly small ones that fit her yard, especially Warren Berg hybrids that grew well in pots. She was a long-time member of the Fraser South Chapter of the ARS, serving as program director and president. In 2005, Norma received the Bronze Medal for her many contributions to that chapter. She was a sought after speaker at local and international meetings; poignantly her last talk was on Irish Gardens to our own chapter in April of this year.

Beyond the academic achievements, Norma was a witty and kindly friend to many. Often when visiting Victoria, Norma would stay with my mother. My mother would tell me about the prizes she would win at the truss show, with Norma being the chooser of which cuttings should be entered. I have the impression that the odd dram of whiskey oiled the harvest.

Norma's parents had many large rhododendrons in their garden and Norma was instrumental in helping move many of them to Finnerty Gardens. When her rhododendrons grew too big for their pots, Norma would give them away to admiring friends. Not long after Ann and I moved to Victoria, Norma asked if we could "use" a Mi Amor that she grew from a cutting in my mother's garden. Each year when it bloomed, Norma would come by for a drink to see it. When it finally hit the roof of the greenhouse, Norma said "Frank it is alright to prune it you know"



# FOND MEMORIES OF A WONDERFUL LADY

THANK YOU ANNE ALLEN





# DID YOU KNOW?

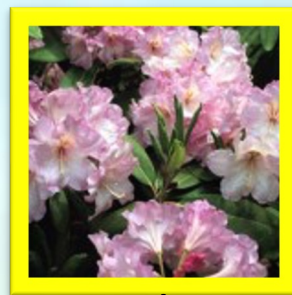
From 1952 to 1983 the Kentville Research Station in Kentville, Nova Scotia carried out an active rhododendron and azalea breeding program under the leadership of Dr. Donald Craig. The breeding program was productive, and it believed that it provided new information as well as viewing pleasure for the general public. The display garden continues to create quite a sensation on Rhododendron Sunday each year in early June.



**Bellefontaine**



**Cornwallis**



**Fundy**



**Gabriel**



**George S. Swain**



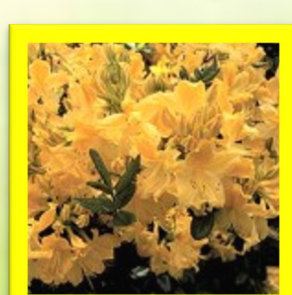
**Jenny Gunn**



**Margaret Gunn**



**Minas Flame**



**Minas Gold**



**Minas Grand Pre.**



**Minas Maid**



**Minas Rose Dawn**





## PEAT MOSS (SPHAGNUM)

ADAPTED FROM THE GUARDIAN  
Jonathan Drori  
A former trustee of the Royal Botanic Gardens,  
Kew

Sphagnum moss is the unassuming principal architect of the peat bog: a serenely beautiful habitat and one of the world's most important ecosystems. Across the sub-Arctic, in water-logged places where colors drawn from a surprisingly wide palette; muted greens and subdued shades of russet, copper and chocolate are dotted here and there with bright patches of warm pinks, oranges and even yellow.

Sphagnum manipulates its environment to suit itself, while sabotaging competitors. Its covering carpet with dangling tangles of dead leaves creates areas of stagnant water of dissolved oxygen and extracts more dissolved nutrients than it needs for its own survival making the bog water very acidic and discouraging most plants and microorganisms.

Unable to decay, dead sphagnum settles and under pressure accretes to form peat. The deepest bogs are more than 10,000 years old. However, they are now threatened by drainage for forestry and agriculture and by cutting for fuel or improving garden soil.



Ask Ken or Frank about the sphagnum moss in growing Barlup cuttings for Denmark





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