## THE VICTORIA RHODODENDRON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2023

### VICTORIA RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

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

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

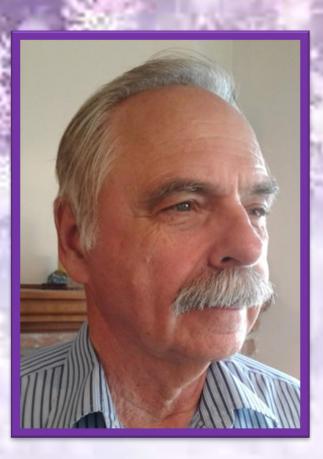
On the first THURSDAY of every month SEPTEMBER - MAY

> Our website is : www.victoriarhodo.ca



#### WELCOME DECEMBER

New month, new chapter, new page and new wishes. May the month give you courage, strength, confidence, patience and peace. May every day be filled with hope, love, sunshine and energy. Let there be joy, fun and laughter.



#### PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

Most of the deciduous trees have lost their battle with the wind and and lay on the ground to become playful toys for the winds. They crunch under our steps somewhat like the snow but in some ways better, as the wind takes care of the cleaning. The pink nerine flowers are losing the battle for beauty from the mixture of wind, rain and cooler weather. The fall flowering cyclamen blooms are over and the whorl of pretty patterned leaves remain. It is the season to enjoy the color of the berries and the varying shapes of differing pine cones. On cold and rainy days we can stay inside and read a book or browse through the varying plant catalogues, planning for the spring and summer months ahead. This is a good time to talk to friends and reconnect again after so many months of varying degrees of isolation.

On November 16, a group of volunteers, along with Esquimalt Parks and Recreation staff, planted 25 new Jim Barlup hybrids, adding to this rare collection of being a single hybridizer's work over many years. These were stored at the Norm Todd Propagating Center and at Calvin's home.

Ken and Madeleine have graciously given our club some space in their propagators for our club to stick cuttings. Seven members brought cuttings on the afternoon of November 17 to be placed there. A total of 161 cuttings from various members' gardens were planted. The Webb's will keep half of the cuttings for themselves and the rest will belong to our society. These will become plant sales rhododendrons or will be part of the monthly raffle we hold after every meeting.

Our traditional Christmas Party will be held on Thursday, December 7, starting at 6 pm. Turkey and ham, as well as a non-alcoholic beverage will be provided. Coffee and tea will be available as well. Members will provide side dishes and desserts. Please look at the Christmas Party page to see what you are responsible for donating. This year the proceeds from our raffle will be donated to the Mustard Seed Food Bank. Rather than bringing food items, donations of cash wiould be much appreciated.

Please remember to bring your own plates, cutlery, cups, napkins, etc. Items for the raffle are also welcomed. No alcohol is allowed to be consumed at the Couvelier Center.

Keep healthy, enjoy life's pleasures and have empathy for others in this Christmas Season.

## CELEBRATING WEST COAST HYBRIDIZERS WARREN BERG

Warren Berg was an airplane pilot who travelled extensively to Asia. These travels provided him with many opportunities to search out the rhododendron species of Asia. In 1960, he initiated a serious study in the propagation of rhododendrons using the Exbury form of R. yakushimanum. His goal was to develop hardy hybrids with nice flowers and indumented foliage. He admits his first error was not continuing with the next generation. He also worked with R. proteoides. Warren is noted for his many "Bee" series plants. One of his most famous hybrids is Golfer, named after his wife.



#### LOYD AND EDDIE NEWCOMB

In 1963, quite by chance Loyd discovered an elderly fellow who lived about three quarters of a mile from him. His name was Halfdan Lem. For about four years he visited Lem's garden regularly, and then began propagating with Van Nes Sensation. Lem told him to throw those seedlings away. Needless to say, he did not. Loyd's early goals were to create plants with calyxes and doubles with a good truss form. He later came to the conclusion that creating a better plant was more important than just creating a beautiful flower. Edie was only registering what she considered worthy plants, as too many were being registered without adequate evaluation.





LOYD'S PLANTS



**EDIE'S PLANTS** 





# CELEBRATING WEST COAST HYBRIDIZERS NED BOCKENBROUGH

Dr. Brockenbrough is credited with hybridizing beautiful hybrid rhododendrons, many of which are available world-wide. His focus was on making second generation "Yak" crosses, improving yellows and orange-reds. As well, he worked on producing tetraploids that would breed with one another with the goal of achieving a new race of rhododendron hybrids with many of the characteristics that are often embodied in plants with increased chromosomes.



#### **JIM BARLUP**

Jim began his career as a rhododendron hybridizer when he wanted to landscape his new home in Bellevue, WA. He set out to purchase an orange rhododendron and soon realized there was no such thing. At that time his wife Judy was studying at the University of Washington, and Jim, being a professional photographer noticed the beautiful rhododendrons on the grounds of the University. With those being his inspiration, and the desire to have an orange rhododendron, made way for his 30 plus years as a world recognized hybridizer. Jim was awarded the ARS Gold Medal in 2004, and The Pioneer Achievement Award in 2018. His outstanding work lives on with many of his hybrid gracing the grounds of the Jim Barlup Legacy Garden in Esquimalt's Gorge Park.









## CELEBRATING DECEMBER BIRTH FLOWERS







Although holly is not technically a flower, holly has a meaning of happiness, optimism, good fortune and peace. This month is filled with festive joy with a new year approaching. Because of their dark green spiked leaves and bright red berries, they also hold much symbolism in Christianity. It is believed that the berries were once white and were stained red from Christ's blood, while the leaves represent the crown of thorns.

Before holly was hung in homes and churches, the druids believed the holly was a sacred plant. Where other flowers wilted in winter, the green and red colors of the holly remained vibrant. It was also seen as a symbol of fertility and a solution to protect places from witches in Pagan times.

A second birth flower for December is the narcissus. With a meaning of hope, wealth and good fortune, the narcissus is a super flower in China. Here it is used to represent the Chinese New Year as it is one of the first flowers to bloom in the spring.

The original story behind the narcissus was that the flower got its name from Narcissus, a young attractive hunter who was completely obsessed with his looks and all things beautiful. One day, he became so absorbed from looking at himself, he ended up drowning from gazing at himself in a pond.

For those who have a birthday in December, it is said that one is a beautiful person, inside and out, with a hunger for success and a positive, can-do attitude. No task is too big. Challenges are accepted. People love to be around your warm and happy nature as you are always filling people with hope and are a supportive friend to all.



### MAKING A TRADITIONAL WINTER POT FOR YOUR PORCH

Adapted from Trowel Talk

A magical formula for an attractive pot needs three things: Thriller, Filler, Spiller. The "thriller" is tall branches or other tall elements that grab your attention. The "filler" is the evergreen boughs which fill most of the space in the planter. The "spiller" flows over the edges to unify the pot and add softness and movement.

Add lots of texture. Fill the planter with different types and an abundance of greenery. Consider using the underside of evergreens as they are often a different hue or texture and provide contrasting shades of green.

Before you start, consider how the planter will be viewed. If seen from all sides, place the materials around the container. Choose your container carefully. Choose one that suits the architecture or style of the home. The container size will determine the ultimate size of the finished arrangement. Think about the scale and proportion of the whole area in which it will be placed.

For an entry door, the container arrangement should be 55 inches tall. This includes the height of the container. An urn would work well here. Other ideas include red dogwood, curly willow or white birch as thrillers

The main component of a winter planter is evergreen boughs. Pine, spruce, fir, cedar, juniper and hemlock are ideal. Winter berry or rose-hip branches are great color accents. Pine cones and magnolia leaves among the greenery brings texture and additional color. Ribbons, bells and Christmas ornaments can provide the decorative material, adding a festive touch.



#### RHODODENDRONS SUPER FLOWERS OF THE HIMALAYAS

ADAPTED FROM SHWETA BASNETT, SEPTEMBER 2023 ROUND GLASS SUSTAIN



INGENIOUS WAYS IN WHICH THE RHODODENDRONS OF SIKKIM ENGAGE WITH THEIR HABITATS AND POLLINATORS

In the Himalayas, the onset of spring is marked by the blooming of rhododendrons, found at altitudes ranging from 1,500 meters to 5,000 meters and are abundant in the Eastern Himalayan region, especially Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh. These attractive species fill the forests with bright streaks of white, yellow, pink, orange and red. Sikkim alone is home to more than 36 rhododendron species.

Rhododendrons are the dominant component of every forest type in the Sikkim Himalayas, and the plants change their shape, size and flower characteristics with a rise in elevation. *R. arboreum* and *R. falconeri* are found in the lower temperate forests. In the mid-subalpine forests, *R. thomsonii, R. campanulatum* and *R. hodgsonii* are growing in those regions and the higher alpine forests are dominated by dwarf woody species such as *R. anthopogom, R. setoum and R. lepidotum*.

The flowering of rhododendrons attracts a huge number of tourists to the Himalayas every year, all keen to experience the spectacular display of colors. Often the fallen blooms cover the entire forest floor like a colorful carpet. In Sikkim, during the flowering season, a rhododendron festival is celebrated in the Barsey and Singbha Rhododendron sanctuaries. The festivals benefit local communities and serve as a source of revenue for the state government.

Rhododendrons have numerous uses. Due to their floral characters, the genus is locally promoted as one of the best ornamentals for urban landscaping. Their nectar, pollen, flowers and leaves are an important resource for bumblebees, flies, birds, pikas, and other animals. They are renowned for their cultural and economic value; the wood is commonly used for timber and firewood, while the leaves, stems and flowers are used in the preparation of traditional medicine, teas and juices. In Himalayan households, mixtures of juniper and dwarf rhododendron leaves are commonly used as incense.





Despite difficult environmental conditions and the resource of constraint of high altitudes, rhododendrons invest a lot of energy in their long flowering season, which lasts from May until July. Different species display flowers of different shapes and sizes to attract certain pollinators, who transfer pollen grains in exchange for nectar. Plants coincide their time of flowering with the peak availability of their potential pollinators. Rhododendrons that are pollinated by birds flower between May and June. During the later months, when food resources are scarce, most nectarivorous birds migrate to lower elevations.

Many studies have concluded that co-occurring plants with similar morphology (size, shape and structure) flower together to facilitate the attraction of similar pollinator groups. Observation of rhododendrons seemingly follow a similar pattern. Research has shown that lower-elevation species of rhododendrons have relatively longer flowering periods, while the mountaintop species have smaller tubular flowers and concentrated nectar that attract pollinators such as bumblebees and flies as they prefer sticky nectar as it is easier for them to access with their proboscis.





Shweta is as postdoctoral researcher at ATREE

# NO BRAIN FOGS THIS DECEMBER

# Christmas Word Search

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BRING YOUR COMPLETED PUZZLE FOR A FREE RAFFLE TICKET





#### Flower Bulb Layering for 2x - 4x the Blooms!

Muscari Grape Hyacinth

Tumps, .

Narcissus Daffodils

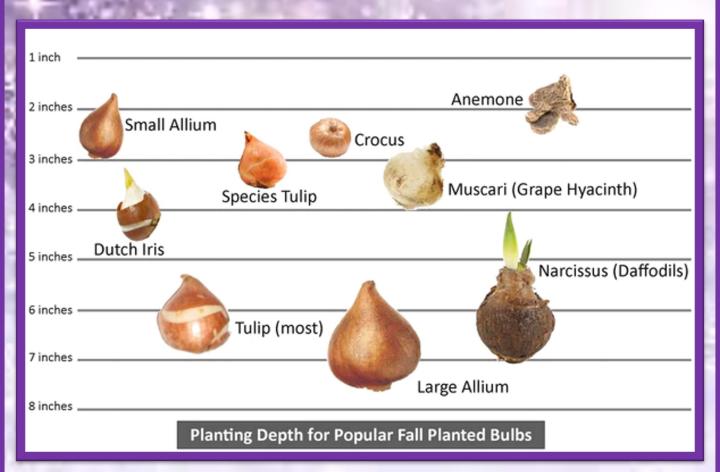
ADAPTED FROM

#### HOW TO MAXIMIZE YOUR PLANTING SPACE WITH FLOWER BULB LAYERING

The Dutch refer the layering of flower bulbs in their world renowned gardens as creating a flower bulb "lasagne". The process is simple. Firstly, determine what type of bulbs you want to layer. The largest bulbs should be planted the deepest. This is the beginning layer. Add a couple of inches of soil, then plant the next size bulbs at the next depth level. If you are planting three or four layers, just continue to add soil between the bulb layers as you go.

As roots and sprouting stems and leaves form, they naturally seek open spaces to grow through. The top growth will weave between the bulbs above to find sunlight and open air above. While some plants will root into a flower bulb to steal its ingredients, there is no need for concern when using this method with different types of bulbs. Flowering bulbs play nicely with other bulbs, so all remain healthy and grow.

Selecting varieties to layer in your planting is about more than just "these to plants should look good together". It is vital to select varieties that are hardy in your climate and that share the same needs for sun exposure and watering. It will not work to plant shade loving bulbs with those that need full sun.



## SOIL PREPARATION FOR FLOWER BULB LAYERING

Flower bulb layering will give you many more blooms per square foot of planting space, either in a container or in the garden bed. The questions are "do you aim for coordinated blooms, where all varieties bloom at the same time ?" or is sequential blooming better, where one layer comes into flower after another fades away? The choice is entirely up to you.



Above is the image of Pinocchio Tulips with Anenome Blanda Blue. This demonstrates the gorgeous results of bulb layering with coordinated blooms.

#### EXTENDING THE BLOOMING SEASON OF BULBS

CROCUS, SQUILL, HYACINTH, DAFFODIL TULIP SEQUENCING BLOOM



SPROUTS COMING OUT



CROCUS AND SCILLA IN BLOOM



HYACINTH AND DAFFODIL SPROUTS



HYACINTH AND DAFFODIL IN BLOOM



TULIPS JOIN THE DANCE





END OF THE SHOW

#### ANENOME, GRAPE HYACINTH, HYACINTH, TULIP SEQUENCING BLOOM



SPROUTS



ANEMONE IN BLOOM



GRAPE HYACINTH



HYACINTH AND TULIP'S TURN



THE ORIGINAL XMAS PUDDING HAD MEAT IN IT, ALONG WITH SPICES AND DRIED FRUITS



PRESIDENT TEDDY ROOSEVELT WAS AN ENVIRONMENTALIST WHO BANNED CHRISTMAS TREES IN THE WHITE HOUSE IN 1912



IN 1843, THE FIRST XMAS CARD WAS SENT BY SIR HENRY COLE WHO HELPED SET UP THE FIRST POST OFFICE IN ENGLAND



COCA COLA IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MODERN IMAGE OF SANTA CLAUS. IN 1931, THE COMPANY HIRED AN ILLUSTRATOR TO CREATE AN IMAGE FOR COCA COLA. BEFORE THAT SANTA LOOKED MORE SPOOKY.

# DID YOU KNOW?

#### FUN CHRISTMAS FACTS

ALL THE GIFTS IN THE 12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS, ADD UP TO 364

JIGLE BELLS WAS THE FIRST CHRISTMAS SONG PLAYED FROM SPACE IN 1965 FROM THE GEMINI 6A SPACE CREW

> SILVER TINSEL ORIGINALLY WAS REAL SILVER BEATEN INTO STRIPS AND HUNG ON THE TREE TO REFLECT THE LIGHT OF

> > THE CANDLES



IN UKRAINE, FINDING A SPIDER WEB IN YOUR XMAS TREE IS A SYMBOL OF GOOD LUCK



THE GERMANS MADE THE FIRST ARTIFICIAL XMAS TREE OUT OF GOOSE FEATHERS



SANTA HAS HIS OWN POSTAL CODE. HIS ADDRESS IS SANTA CLAUS, NORTHPOLE, CANADA HO HO HO



IN 1670, THE CHOIR MASTER AT THE COLOGNE CATHEDRAL IN GERMANY, GAVE RED AND WHITE SUGAR STICKS TO KEEP THE CHILDREN QUIET DURING THE LIVING CRECHE



MISTLETOE IS FROM

THE SAXON WORD

'MISTELTAN' WHICH

**MEANS 'LITTLE DUNG** 

TWIG', AS THE SEED IS

DROPPINGS

SPREAD BY BIRD

THE BIGGEST GIFT EVER RECEIVED WAS THE STATUE OF LIBERTY GIVEN TO THE US BY FRANCE IN 1865



THE GRINCH, A COMPUTER CREATED FILM MADE IN 2018, IS THE LARGEST XMAS MOVIE EVER, GROSSING \$ 512,858, 819 WORLD-WIDE

#### BEST PLANTS TO DECORATE WITH AND CARE FOR THEM AT CHRISTMAS



AMARYLLIS

Prized for their ability to bloom indoors, these exoticlooking flowers bloom about 4-6 weeks after planting the bulb. Place in a bright light, and turn the pot every few days to help the plant grow upright. Keep soil evenly moist.



CYCLAMEN

These cool-weather plants tolerate temperatures into the 4o's. which is why they are popular in the winter months. They can bloom for more than 8 weeks with the right conditions. Place in medium diffused light. Avoid drafts, and deadhead spent flowers and leaves. Water from the base.



ORCHID

These delicate-looking plants are not as fragile as they appear and will bloom for months with little care. Give orchids bright, indirect light and prefer it on the cooler side indoors. Avoid sudden temperature drops and water once a week.



NORFOLK ISLAND PINE

This long-lasting plant is native to the South Pacific. It cannot be planted outside in most areas. It makes a great tabletop tree. One must use light weight decorations as the branches tend to droop. It needs 6-8 hours of light per day. Water when dry to touch.



CHRISTMAS CACTUS

Christmas cacti are one of the hardiest indoor plants that can bloom during the Christmas season. Much will depend on what species one has, as other species bloom at differing times. The only care needed is to water carefully to not let the plant sit in water.



FROSTY FERN

These adorable fern-like plants tinged with white are fairly new to the Christmas scene. Place them in low to medium light and they prefer consistent humidity. They are great in terrariums. Water from below by placing plant in a saucer of water for 15 minutes.



POINSETTIA

Poinsettias are the classic Christmas plant. Choose a plant that has little yellow flowers in the center as the plant is at prime condition. Cover your plant when bringing it home, especially in cold weather. Water only when soil is dry to the touch.



PAPERWHITES

Paperwhites often come with kits or loose bulbs with a planting medium. Potting them up, one will enjoy fragrance for 2 to 3 weeks. Keep them in a cool sunny place. Tie the branches together to keep the stems upright. Water to keep the soil evenly moist.





Thank you Lloyd









Thank you Bill McMillan



#### LODERI "KING GEORGE" AND HIS COUSINS/CLONES

Sir Edmund Loder (1849-1920) was a well-known rhododendron hybridizer and is famous for the Loderi series of rhododendrons. In 1873, his father purchased Whittenbury Estate with its 600 acres of parkland. One year later, Edmund left England for an 18 month long trip to see the world. It was while he was in India that he saw the large rhododendron trees that made such an impression on him. On his return to England, he married and his father set him up with a 300 acre property called Floore.

At that time hybridizers worked under a veil of secrecy as the status of one's garden depended on how many rare plants it contained. When Edmund's father died suddenly, Edmund left Floore to his brother and returned to a more temperate climate. He purchased the 240-acre Leonardslee Estate from his father-in law. This estate is located in Horsham, near West Sussex.

Many of his plants were named after family members and personalities. It is noted that many of his crosses did not flower until after his death.

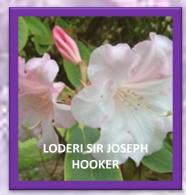
































Victoria Rhododendron Society congratulates this years graduates of the HCP Pacific Horticulture College

Kathryn Alvarez

Faith Brown

Paige Burton

Tierra Doyle

Braedan Drouillard

Marie Galbraith

Taylor Lott

Victoria Murdock

Vanessa Neame



www.victoriarhodo.ca

November 17, 2023

The members and board of the Victoria Rhododendron Society congratulate you on a successful completion of your 2023 term at the Pacific Horticulture College.

We wish to give you a one year membership in our society. Your membership card is enclosed.

Our group meets in the HCP Couvelier Pavilion on the first Thursday of the month, September to May, doors open at 7pm. Please do join us.

We also maintain the HCP Rhododendron Garden and the rhododendron propagation centre here on the grounds.

You will receive our monthly newsletter by email. Our website is VictoriaRhodo.ca

Wishing you a Happy and Productive Gardening Career. The Victoria Rhododendron Society Felicia Pedersen

Jennifer Pedersen

Keely Roberts

Lynsey Saunders

Donald River Stevens

Sebastien Strembiski

Yee M Tang

lris Weiss

Megan Wong

The graduates were given a one year student membership in Vic Rhodo

















Once again, VicRS members volunteered their time and efforts to add 25 new Barlup hybrids to the Legacy Garden. These efforts are sincerely appreciated as every little bit helps in a volunteer effort.

We say thank you, thank you, thank you to those who helped with this on going project.





## TRANSPLANTING RHODODENDRONS 101

#### FROM WEST SAANICH ROAD TO SOOKE









# THE INVITATION FROM THE WEBB'S TO STICK CUTTINGS FOR THE VICRS, NOVEMBER 17, 2023



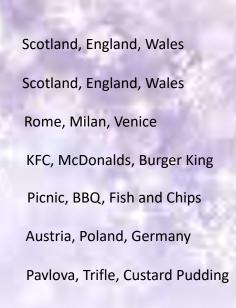
Several members of the VicRS took the invitation from the Webb's to bring cuttings from their own gardens to stick in the Webb's propagator. The successful takes will be donated to our society. The purpose of this effort is to supply unusual rhododendrons for our monthly raffle tables and for our sales in the coming springs.

When sufficient growth has occurred, they will be donated to the VicRS and will be held at the Norm Todd Propagating Center. As many of our members have unusual and commercially unavailable rhododendrons in their gardens, this effort by our members is a demonstratable effort in meeting the aspect of the purpose of our society "TO PROMOTE AND EDUCATE THE PUBLIC ABOUT THE GENUS RHODODENDRON."

"Suscess is no accidents. It is hard work, perseverance, learning, studying, sacrifice and most of all, love of what you are doing," – Pele

#### FOOD AND DRINK AROUND THE WORLD AT CHRISTMAS

Which country created eggnog? In which country is associated with shortbread? Panettone originated in what Italian city? In Japan, what do Japanese people eat at Xmas? In Australia and New Zealand, what is eaten at lunch? Which country is Stollen come from? What is the most popular dessert in New Zealand?













#### BONKERS CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS AROUND THE WORLD

In which country do naughty children get rotten potatoes in their shoes?

In which country are streets shut down for rollerskating Christmas Eve?

In which country do shepherds play bagpipes in the town squares and piazzas?

In which country is it considered good luck to keep a fish in the bath?

In which country, do they keep fires burning to ward off goblins?

In which country do they burn a fake 13 meter goat in the town center?





Greenland, Iceland, Ireland

Brazil, Chile, Venezuela

Turkey, Italy, Scotland

Hungary, Moldova, Poland

Bulgaria, Greece, Romania

Norway, Sweden, Denmark

#### MORE BONKERS TRADITIONS FOR YOUR ENJOYMENT

PERHAPS ONE WILL ADD THESE TO THEIR OWN CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS...JUST TO ADD A LAUGH AND A SMILE TO YOUR FAMILY ACTIVITIES

FROM OAXACA, MEXICO...Carve radishes into people, animals and other decorative shapes MEDIEVAL, EUROPE...Make a homemade orange and clove pomander to protect against the plague SWEDEN...Decorate your homes and Christmas trees with straw goats NORWAY...On Christmas Eve hide all your brooms from the evil spirits RUSSIA...Dive into the freezing lakes and rivers UK...Add candy and sweet treats to your Christmas crackers FRANCE...After midnight mass on Christmas Eve, celebrate a big feast in the early hours of Christmas Day CHZECH...Cut an apple in half...a cross means getting sick, a star means health and happiness CATALONIA...Create a 'pooping log', in a blanket filled with goodies kids hit it with sticks to see their treats SOUTH AFRICA...On Christmas Day, instead of turkey, prepare fried caterpillars PORTUGAL...Leave out an extra plate of food for the souls of the dead on Christmas morning ENGLAND... When making Christmas pudding, each person has a "go" at stirring it and making a wish GERMANY/AUSTRIA...Krampus searches out naughty children and takes them away DENMARK... Kids leave out a bowl of rice pudding for Santa's elves with an almond inside IRELAND...The Irish leave a tall red candle in the front window as a welcoming symbol

BARBADOS...They eat baked ham, decorated with pineapple, rum cake and Jug Jug, a dish of peas, guinea corn flour, herbs and salt mt











#### OUR ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2023

STARTING AT 6 PM

MEMBERS WHOSE LAST NAMES BEGIN WITH A-L <u>PLEASE BRING A SAVORY</u> MEMBERS WHOSE LAST NAME'S BEGIN WITH M-Z <u>PLEASE BRING A DESSERT</u>

MEMBERS WILL BRING THEIR OWN CUTLERY, DISHES, CUPS, NAPKINS AND RAFFLE DONATIONS

# Vic Rhodo Christmas Dinner Wreath and Table Centre Piece

Work Party



Thursday December 07 in the morning at the hcp greenhouses. Hcp garden floral volunteers will be there to instruct and assist us. If you can help, contact Ian Duncan <u>duncani@telus.net</u> 250-479-0820



PRESIDENT LLOYD GILMORE 250-642-2256

VICE-PRESIDENT FRANK BUFFAM 778-432-4649

TRESURER BILL GORDON 250-479-0210

SECRETARY SHARON JOSEPH 250-383-1756

M. A. L. CALVIN PARSONS 250-590-0489

M. A. L. KEN WEBB 250-477-1785

M.A.L. DAN SYROID 250-477-9210

M.A.L. IAN DUNCAN 250-479-0820

LOIS BLACKMORE 236-562-6778

MICHAEL TRIPP 250-477-4407

ELLEN WELLBORN 250-479- 1898

ROBERT BURKE 250-477-5386

BRENDA MACDONALD 778-528-3647

> BETTY GORDON 250-479-0210



