VICTORIA RHODODENDRON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER APRIL 2024

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
at 7:30
on the first THURSDAY
of every month
SEPTEMBER - MAY

Our website is: www.victoriarhodo.ca







PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



The recent wave of above seasonal temperatures has resulted in many people getting their yards ready to enjoy the first flowers of spring. Daffodils can be seen throughout our neighborhoods announcing spring is officially here. Crocus are winding down and being replaced with Erythroniums and Shooting Stars. Aubretia deltoides is appearing along the rocks near Helmcken Hospital. Native maples are on the precipice of flowering and the mahonias are showing off their bright yellow flowers. A few rhododendrons are in bloom. The swelling buds of others are getting ready to burst into flower in April and May. There is evidence that many rhododendrons suffered damage due to the unusual freezing temperatures we recently experienced. At Finnerty Gardens the big leaf rhododendrons showed quite severe damage as approximately 80 % of the leaves are on the ground, although the buds remain on the plants. It is to be noted R.macabeanum at the HCP received little damage

as it is planted under a grove of Douglas fir.

I am a Spacex fan and I recently heard the term 'Rocket Garden' pertaining to the assembly of rockets outside. I found that very uplifting.

The Patio Container Garden at HCP is getting closer to being finished. I urge you to take a couple of minutes before our next meeting to walk over to see the progress. If arriving early, the rhododendron garden has a few blooms showing for your pleasure.

Our meeting on Thursday, April 4 will start with the show and sale information. There will be 'sign up' sheets for volunteers for May 11 Show and Sale. Set up will take place the previous evening. Linda Derkach, President of the American Rhododendron Society will give a presentation called "The ARS: New Directions For Our Changing Times". Our plant raffle will follow. Tea and coffee will be available along with sweets. Please remember to bring your own mug.

Entry tag and vases will be available as you leave.

Please note that Ken and Madeleine plant sale is April 20 from 10 am until 1 pm.

Tony and Carolyn are selling plants at the Nanaimo and Victoria plant sale. If looking for a specific plant, one can contact the Marquardts at tonymarquardt@shaw.ca.

Show and Sale opportunítíes to be involved.

There will be sign up sheets at the April 04 meeting. Publicity

- -Attend other garden club meetings and hand out Show/Sale brochure and do announcement of event to members.
- Contact garden clubs newsletter editors to put Show/Sale announcement in their April publication.
- -visit libraries/garden stores/local stores to but up brochure poster.
- -write an article for Helen Chestnut/ Times-Colonist paper.

Fríday May 10 set up

- -Set up from 3pm to 5pm
- --bottle/vases/supplies brought up from Norm Todd Compound shed.
- --set up tables, plastic table covers, skirts, chairs in the pavilion.
- --set up outside sale plant tables, two 10x10 shelters, cashiers tables and chairs, hang club banner, balustrades and plastic chain around sale area, signage.
- --need 2 or 3 pickup trucks to bring plants up from Norm Todd Compound to sales tables. Drivers and 2 or 3 helpers.
- --put vases and bottles on tables, fill with water, ready for folk to put their trusses in.

Friday May 10 Truss Entries

Trusses brought in from 5pm to 8pm.

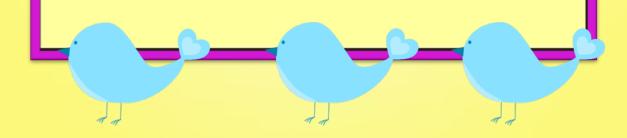
- -- assist folk getting trusses in vases.
- --assist convener with putting entries in place on show tables.

Saturday May 11 Show and Sale

- -- two shifts 8:30 to 12:30 & 12:30 to 4:30. or whatever period of time
- you can help.
- -- Sales desk, 2 tally clerks, 1 or 2 cashiers.
- -- Sales area, 2 or 3 rovers to answer purchasers questions.
- -- Pavilion, 2 at information and membership table.
- --Show floor, 2 floaters to answer questions
- -- parking lot, 1 or 2 directors (additional angle parking down Quayle rd)

After 4pm tear down

- -- 4 to 4:20pm time for folk to retrieve the trusses they wish to keep.
- --4:20pm remove remaining trusses, empty vases, remove skirts and table plastic, put away tables and chairs, pick up floor debris.
- -- move excess plants back to Norm Todd Compound.
- -- put away tables, chairs and shelters, remove club banner and signs, sweep pavers.





Show Entry Form



PJ	M		
☐ Speci	ies	⊠ H	ybrid
Flowers: (F	arty	Mid	Lete
Plant Size.	-8	#	
Plant Age:	33	yr	
Grows best	Cpart	ial sha	de)
	full	sun	

Pick up forms & bottles at April Meeting.

Bring your own bag or box to carry entry form or bottles

At the show you may transfer your trusses into the coloured glass vases or use the green ginger beer bottles. Some tiny bottles are available for those very small trusses.

The Entry Form

Place your bottle in the circle.

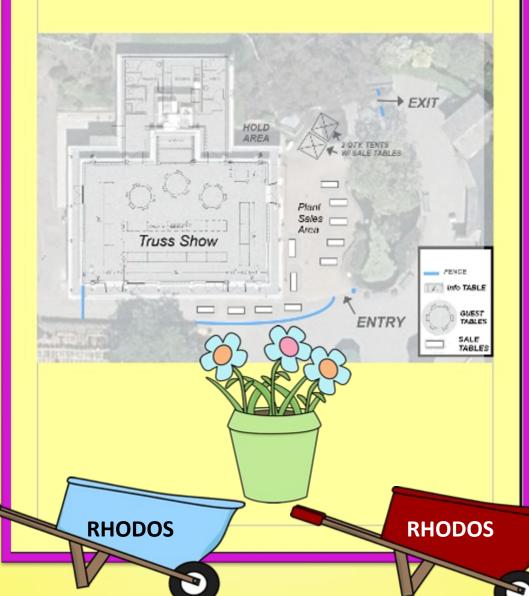
If you want to keep your truss after the show, put your name in the circle. You will have from 4:00 to 4:20 to collect them.

Trusses without exhibitors name will be composted.

Please print

Plant name
Indicate species or hybrid
Flowering: early, mid or late
how tall is the plant
how old is the plant
does it grow in: partial shade
or full sun

Show floorplan





SCHEDULED FOR SUNDAY JUNE 23
STARTING AT NOON
FRESH SALMON FILETS ON THE BARBECUE
SIDE DISHES AND DESSERTS TO BE BROUGHT BY
MEMBERS
PLEASE CONTACT LLOYD IF YOU ARE WILLING TO HOST
THIS EVENT
250-642-2256
gilmore2080@gmail.com



Our new venture of having our annual show and sale at the

HCP gardens is occurring at the same time as we usually have Open Gardens for our members to visit and to enjoy the delights of other members efforts. With the unusual weather patterns we have had this spring, the Board has not asked specific members to allow visitors because of the differing bloom times throughout our regions.

We are now asking for those whose gardens are in bloom or are about to bloom, to consider opening their garden for viewing. Weekends and evenings are ideal times for visits. If you are considering opening your garden for viewing, please contact Lloyd Gilmore at 250-642-2256 or





IN A GARDEN HOPE, ALWAYS

Ideas from HORTICULTURE ... SCOTT BEUERLEIN



Each time you come home with a new plant and give it a good home in your ground you perform an act of faith for a better future. When you move a struggling rhododendron from here to there, likewise. Every day we work toward the promise of beauty from our efforts. Such expectations for new and better are a part of every gardening decision.

Gardens provide hope for our spirits. Each new plant adds to that spirit, that anticipation of newness, adding to nature as best we can. These efforts provide us with anticipation of better days ahead. Even the old man from the proverb "who plants a tree under whose shade he will not sit" envisions a future for others.

The garden speeds through the seasons with such determination. Spring's emerging shoots soon lead to dazzling flowers. The bees bring their pollen to help make seeds for another season and provide the vessels of new life.

We can get lost in our gardens. Our focus changes. It clears our heads. Noisy thoughts disappear. There is no room in our heads or minds except determining that this is the perfect place for my latest rhododendron.



Looking Back in Time

reprints of articles from early editions of our newsletter, written by members or guests.

(we have newsletters back to 1993. If you have earlier editions, please contact Ian Duncan/ Anne Allen)

This article is by Joe Harvey from September 1995

${\it Blast}$ - by MJ Harvey

That is bud blast, spelled Pynostyneanus Azaleae, is a fungal disease of rhododendrons characterized by the flower buds failing to open, turning brown and becoming covered with a fuzz of black hairs - the fungal fruiting bodies.

Now a lot of my rhododendron buds fail to open . This is caused by sudden cold snaps in winter, or especially, spring. I am used to this in our location near Victoria which is a bit of a frost hollow.* But fungal bud blast is different. It is not caused by physical conditions but by an infection by fungal spores in summer. The fungus penetrates the young bud, grows slowly over the fall and winter and finally, when it has turned the flowers to a black husk, puts out a mass of black spores to repeat the cycle. It is the fuzz of black spores which distinguishes blast from frost damage.

Until recently I was pleased never to have seen this unwelcome disease. In early June 1995 I was taken to the wild population of R. macrophyllum inland from Shawnigan Lake on Vancouver Island. This is a very small population of, I suspect, fewer than 100 plants in an area of about 30 by 30 meters. One of its surprising features is a high incidence of fungal bud blast. It looks worse than it actually is since the affected buds persist mummified for a number of years all down the old branches. There were up to six successive blasted buds on some stems. I should emphasize however that there was a vivid

display of Blossoms. There was insufficient blast to lower the flower production noticeably.

Now I must admit that I am slightly <u>eurocentric</u>. That is the concept that a lot of good things, and bad, have originated in Europe. I assume that, like measles, <u>rhodo</u> bud blast was introduced from Europe.

The shear isolation of the Shawnigan Lake population - 20 km from the end of the paved road - makes me reconsider the above idea. It seems equally, or more likely, that the disease is native - that it has been here since before humans invaded the Americas. It has also been reported by Leech on Wild Rhododendrons of SE USA. Curiously, I had not noticed blast on the Rhododendron Lake population further north on Vancouver Island. I must go again and look more closely. Has anyone else seen it there?

Among other comments I came across, Cox says that in Britain it is not as serious disease and affects mostly R. caucasicum and R. ponticum and their hybrids. He says it is spread by a leafhopper which makes slits in the buds preparatory to laying its eggs. Leach thinks bees might distribute spores incidental to carrying a pollination.

Several questions arise: are the spors wind distributed? It seems to me that air currents would be a more expected mode of spread than bees or leaf hoppers. Is our other widespread, but montane species R. abiflorum affected? Blast appears to be predominantly a disease of subsection Pontica [R. macrophyllum, maximum, catawbiense, ponticum and caucasicum] and why are vegetative buds not affected or are they? Have you got it in your garden? Please write and let us know.

I have to thank Shane Ford a graduate student at <u>U.Vic</u> for showing me the <u>Shawnigan</u> site. Shane is working on the population biology of West Coast R. macrophyllum for his M.SC. thesis.

^{*} at the time this was written Joe and Linda lived on <u>Sooke</u> Road just a km this side of 17 mile house.







FROM GARDEN GATE



Leaves emerge with gold accents in spring and mature to solid gold with purple petioles. Early spring flowers are rosy purple, fade to dusty rose and last for weeks.





A bold texture for the shade garden. Grows to 24" with evergreen holly foliage.



"Snowtime" has white blooms on 18" tall stems, with glossy cabbage like leaves. Flowers spring and fall.



Very floriferous, more so than other varieties, will also grow in full sun



Has interesting streaks and speckles, with each leaf being different.
Scapes rise up to 48 " with tubular white flowers.





A REMINDER AS YOU STROLL THROUGH YOUR GARDEN

DO YOU HAVE ANY OF THESE ISSUES?













WHAT TO DO ABOUT WINTER-DAMAGED RHODODENDRONS

MEGAN SHINN FROM HORTICULTURE 2021



Winter did a number on my rhododendrons.

There are brown curled leaves and some stem ends appear dead. Should I cut these all off, or what else can I do to improve my shrubs appearances?

Exposure to harsh sun, cold winds and freezing temperatures can cause dry, brown, curled leaves and branches. Patience is key as you wait for the plants to bounce back, which they very well may do. In the meantime, you can remove dead leaves to make way for new ones.

After you have given the plant plenty of time to begin spring growth---waiting until late spring...you can then scratch the bark on the dead-looking branches with your fingernail. If there is green wood underneath, the branch is still alive.

Leave plants in place because they may push out new growth yet. If a branch is brown underneath, the branch is dead and you can prune it off.

Much winter damage and injury on rhododendrons is caused by excessive drying. Symptoms are characterized by tip or marginal browning and necrosis of leaves, longitudinal rolling of leaves along the mid-vein, dieback of twigs and branches and desiccation of growing tips or twigs. Too much water has been evaporated from the leaves without any water to replace it. When the ground is frozen solid, it limits the amount of water that can be brought back into the plant and without adequate water levels, the plants will eventually die.







I SAY OLD CHAPS...

ARE YOU OFF TO THE CHELSEA GARDEN SHOW IN 2024?

MAY 21 - MAY 25

The theme this year is called "ALL ABOUT PLANTS". The All About Plants category was introduced in 2022 and champions the 'positive power of plants to improve lives and livelihoods'. Project Giving Back will be supporting 15 gardens for good causes. This allows UK-registered charitable organizations to live on after the show and the gardens will continue to be in permanent locations around the UK. The hot topics of drought and flooding and urban biodiversity and wellbeing will also be prominent themes.

Gardens include:

THE NATIONAL GARDEN SCHEME GARDEN
THE WATER AID GARDEN
THE OCTAVIA HILL GARDEN
TERRANCE HIGGINS TRUST BRIDGE TO 2030 GARDEN
ST. JAMES PICCADILLY..IMAGINE THE WORK TO BE DIFFERENT
FORESTY BATHING GARDEN
STROKE ASSOCIATION'S GARDEN FOR RECOVERY
THE NATIONAL AUTISTIC SOCIETY GARDEN
FLOOD RESISILIENT GARDEN
FREEDOM FROM TORTURE GARDEN
WORLD CHILD CANCER'S NURTURING GARDEN
THE WONDERSTRUCK GARDEN
BURMA SKINCARE INITIATIVE SPIRIT OF PARTNERSHIP GARDEN
THE BOODLES NATIONAL GALLERY GARDEN





ORCHESTRATING COLOR THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

IDEAS TAKEN FROM THE NATIONAL GARDENING ASSOCIATION

For most of us in the rhododendron world, color in the garden is a moot point during the months of April through early June. With a little planning, color with rhododendrons can occur March through to July. One needs to become aware of early bloomers and those rhododendrons that come into bloom during the early summer months. One does not need acres of land to manage this color palette. Making smart choices so that enough plants are flowering at one time can create an impression of sustained color throughout the garden.

Adding perennials can become part of a bloom bonanza. Most perennials bloom for approximately 3 weeks. Choosing spots in the garden to add color with perennials lessens the overall work. The next step is to add biennials, vines, bulbs and other flowering shrubs with different shapes and sizes. This allows a surprising number of plants that can be tucked into other nooks and crannies, making a garden palette of beautiful color and texture.

VERY EARLY BLOOMERS

Olive
Prince Abkhazi
Winter Peach
Bric-a brac
Candy Apple Red
R. duaricum
Lee's Scarlet

EARLY BLOOMERS

R. auriculatum
Avalanche
Dora Amateis
Polar Bear
Melrose Flash
R. edgeworthii
Dexter's Springtime

LATE BLOOMERS

Bergie Larson Frank Galsworthy Jonathan Shaw Malahat Satsop Sunrise R. myrtifolium Polar Bear









HOW DOES GARDENING MAKE YOU HAPPIER?



ADAPTED FROM





Does gardening leave you happy and relaxed? After a day in the garden, do you feel you have accomplished something? Your brain may be telling you something. Gardening is actually an effective way of improving psychological wellbeing. With all the digging, lifting, pruning, weeding, watering, planting, raking, transplanting and moving, it is clear that gardening can have many physical benefits as well.

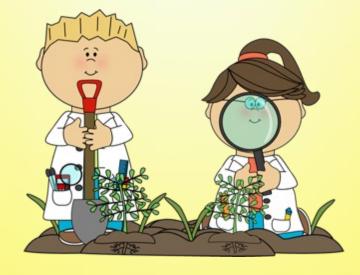
In Japan, there is a growing trend called "forest bathing" where people immerse themselves in the outdoors as a way to refresh, unwind, and boost concentration. Why has this caught on? Because it is effective. Studies have shown that forest bathing forces people to disconnect from distractions and be more mindful of their immediate surroundings. When weeding a garden, it requires a high degree of focus in order to identify unwanted plants. By noticing the smallest details, one is also improving one's concentration.

Then there is the sentimental attachment to your garden through its history.

Memories, experiences, travel, watering and purchases and their placement. All tell garden stories. Welcoming visitors. Seeing from planting to blossom. Every day one is adding to the beauty of nature whether planning for or adding to the garden.

The overlying idea of gardening is that caring for something other than yourself can be gratifying and purposeful.







ATTRACTING HUMMINGBIRDS WITH RED FLOWERS

ADAPTED FROM HORTICULTURE

Hummingbirds will visit flowers of any color, but red seems especially attractive to them. This is a true preference; a behaviour related to efficiency. Bees do not see red well; flowers of blue, purple and white show up better to them. Since bees might overlook red flowers, hummingbirds are more likely to find more nectar within them.

The shape of the flower is also important, with tubular blossoms catering to hummer's long bill and tongue. These characteristics give them an advantage over other pollinators when accessing nectar deep within a flower.

Hummingbirds do not subsist on nectar alone. They consume lots of arthropods, such as spiders. They also steal insects trapped in spider webs, and use bits of webs in their nests. So besides planting their preferred flowers, support hummingbirds by skipping pesticides.



















THE UPS AND DOWNS OF OPENING YOUR GARDEN FOR A GARDEN TOUR

Ideas from Agriculture







After you casually agree to open your garden for a garden tour, the psychodrama begins. One begins to look at one's garden with fresh eyes....especially through the eyes of the visitors.

Suddenly your garden doesn't look anywhere near as good as you thought it did. Mistakes. Flaws. Up-close flaws hiding faraway flaws. Weeds. Do I need to deadhead the early bloomers? Will people notice.

OMG! What have I agreed to. Will it be ready? I don't think my garden measures up. Do I have time to get into the shape I imagine?

Driven by sheer panic, you sweat every detail. You work and work and work.
Tomorrow it is!

The day has arrived. A last peek at the garden in the early morning. Lo and behold ... it looks pretty good. Visitors arrive. You stand around as the visitors stroll respectfully around...some asking questions...you realize you do know something...you answer them helpfully based on your own experience...some guests comment that they have a similar plant and...you learn something new.

It is the end of the day. Visitors have gone. Reflections start. I think people enjoyed themselves. Everyone seemed pleased. Talked to people I hardly knew. Met new people too. It wasn't so bad. WHEW... I made it. Easy Peasy Lemon Squeezy! I'll have white please, with the largest wine glass!

ADDING WISTERIA TO YOUR GARDEN

ADAPTED FROM HORTICULTURE MAGAZINE ENGLAND







Effortlessly beautiful and timelessly charming, wisteria is famously known for the pendulous lilac, white or bluish flowers it produces in late spring and early summer. The stems are stiff and woody, and the trunks can become as thick as a small tree.

If one wants to add a wisteria, it is best to add one that has been grafted. Even then, one may have to wait for five years before blooming. The best time for planting is between October and April. If grown in a container, one can plant anytime.

Wisterias need fertile, well-drained soil and prefer a south or west-facing direction. Being a vigorous climber, one needs to support them against a wall, wires, another garden structure or even a tree. Full sunshine is preferable, but they will tolerate a little shade, although this will reduce flowering. If planting in a container, it should be at least 18 inches in depth and should be filled with a loam-based potting compost.

Wisterias can dry out quickly. Water frequently. Especially during dry spells. In spring, a high potash feed will encourage flowering. Rose fertilizer will also work.



WISTERIA SINENSIS

Japanese



WISTERIA FLORIBUNDA Chinese



WISTERIA FRUTESCENS American

FERNS...THE PERFECT GARDEN FILLER

PERFERCT FERNS FOR THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

ADAPTED FROM INTOCASCADIA...DANDURSTON







DEER FERN

Deer fern grows on the forest floor in medium sized clumps of bright green fronds that are knee to waist high.







SWORD FERN

Sword ferns are a deeper shade of green and get big, with plants up to chest high. In a pinch, one can cook, peel and eat the roots.







BRACKEN FERN

Bracken fern has fronds that are triangular shaped and grow to waist high. One can eat young fiddleheads if boiled and fried. Some believe they are not good for you.







OAK FERN

Oak Fern is like a bracken fern and forms a wedge shape, but it exists as a single, small frond instead of a cluster of big fronds. They usually grow in patches and are found in the darker places of the deciduous forest understory.





LICORICE FERN

Licorice Fern will not grow on the ground. It insists on a mossy vertical surface like the sides of a mossy boulder or on mossy deciduous trees like Big Leaf Maples. They grow in single fronds and are connected by a rhizome running through the moss.







MAIDENHAIR FERN

Maidenhair ferns like really wet growing conditions, often living on rocks along a stream. They has unique black stems and uniquely shaped leaves.

PERRENIAL PLANT OF THE YEAR 2024 ACCORDING TO HORTICULTURE



"Jeana' phlox has been voted Perennial Plant of the year for 2024 by the Perennial Plant Association, which annually singles out a perennial that's beautiful, low maintenance and suitable across many growing regions. It is a cultivar of the tall, North American garden phlox (phlox paniculata) that blooms in the second half of summer. 'Jeana" is lauded for its resistance to powdery mildew and its profuse, vibrant colors.









THE BEST GARDEN PLANTS WITH CHARTREUSE FOLIAGE

Adapted from Matthew Olson, February 2024, Horticulture Magazine

Green comes in many forms, from dark and subtle to bright and vibrant. Chartreuse is far from subtle; a combination of green and yellow, and it can look electric. Chartreuse color in the garden adds another element of beauty and texture. Adding such a vibrant color allows us to expand our color palette.



A garden with shade is the perfect place to highlight the uniqueness of chartreuse, but the color also looks good in sunny areas. One way to showcase it is to scatter specimens planted across the garden, drawing attention to each part of the landscape. Drifts of chartreuse are effective where flowers are less prevalent.

Depending on the size of the garden there are shrubs, trees, and grasses that will provide this 'snap' of color to your garden. Much will depend on garden size, climate and how much light is available for certain plants.

PERENNIALS WITH CHARTREUSE FOLIAGE



'SUN KING' ARALIA



'GOLD HEART' BLEEDING HEART



'AUREOLA' HAKONE GRASS



'TWIST OF LIME' HEUCHERA

SHRUBS WITH CHARTREUSE FOLIAGE



'GOLDEN SPIRIT' SMOKEBUSH



'LEMON CANDY' NINEBARK







IT IS THE MIDDLE OF JUNE...RHODODENRONS HAVE BLOOMED

WE NEED SOME COLOR...WHAT CAN WE PLANT

THESE CULTIVARS HAVE EXCELLED IN THE TRIAL GARDENS FROM ALL-AMERICA SELECTIONS



CELESOIA 'BURNING EMBERS'



MARIGOLD SIAM GOLD



GERANIUM 'BIG EEZE"



PETCHOA ENVIVA PINK



IMPATIENCE SOLARSCAPE XL PINK JEWEL





YOU CAN GROW CITRUS FRUITS IN VICTORIA? YOU ARE KIDDING ME! SEE FOR YOUR OWN EYES

Presentation by Bob Duncan







A.G.M.





RAFFLE





MEETING

APRIL 7, 2024



THANK YOU NADINE



THE WEBB'S 5008 OLD WEST SAANICH



SATURDAY, APRIL 20 9AM. – 1PM.

TRANSFERRING FROM ONE GARDEN TO ANOTHER

There are many ways to create a rhododendron garden, especially one with mature plants. With the help of Ken and Madeleine, John is happily transferring "Promise of Spring' to his newly established garden. Such kindness is welcomed, as this is the second large rhododendron to find a new home from Saanich to Sooke.









VICTORIA RHODODENDRON SOCIETY BOARD MEMBERS FOR 2024-2025

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