



CHURCH
SOUTH ISLAND

VICTORIA RHODODENDRON SOCIETY
FIRST MEETING
SEPTEMBER 10, 2026

NOTE DATE CHANGE

TO MY COLLEAGUES IN THE VICTORIA RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

I have been doing the newsletter since December of 2020. As we move into the fall of 2026, much has happened in the rhododendron world as many of us have come to know it. Currently, the American Rhododendron Society has no events scheduled for 2027. Past newsletters have centered around local events and those sponsored by the American Rhododendron Society, plus other international rhododendron news. Seemingly, that era has passed for the most part, forcing our newsletter to reach beyond the rhododendron world many of us have known for a multitude of years.

As the current producer of our newsletter, I search the internet for as much information about rhododendrons as I can find to include, that is relevant to the rhododendron world, even using AI. However, I know my background as an educator has a certain presence in what I include. I am asking that if anyone finds interesting information, or has information or ideas about what is relevant to our society, whether local or international, please let me know.

LOIS BLACKMORE

THE VICTORIA RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

SEPTEMBER 2026

NEWSLETTER

THE 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.

Meetings are held on the first
THURSDAY
of each month

SEPTEMBER – MAY

Our website is
www.victoriarhodo.ca



May the sweet
memories you
make in
September keep
you warm through
the fall days
ahead.

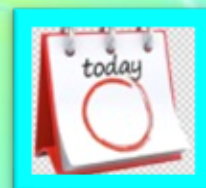


What goes round comes around. If you do good deeds you will be rewarded...possibly with a silver polishing job. The Abkhazi Trophy, a beautiful silver tray, is awarded by the Victoria Rhododendron Society to an individual or couple who have contributed significantly to the club during the prior year. The recipients of this year's award presented at the 2026 annual VicRS potluck picnic were Brenda Macdonald and Sean Rafferty. Brenda manages our membership list, distributes and does some editing for the VicRS newsletter, and also edits the Rhododendron Species Botanical Foundation annual Journal. Sean contributes to the Propagation Group, facilitates the plant raffles and donates plants he has raised to our raffles. Together they opened their wonderful Shirley, BC. Garden to the bus tours the VicRS hosted for the ARS Spring Convention. Thank you Sean and Brenda and congratulations. We were pleased to include Cherie Miltimore, the site manager and volunteer coordinator for Victoria's historic Abkhazi Garden, as one of our guests at the 2026 picnic to witness the tray being awarded. Abkhazi Garden was one of the stops on one of our bus Yours for the Convention.

Collaboration with and volunteer and financial support for other garden groups and charities is another way we enrich our club. Abkhazi, Milner, Kildonan House, Esquimalt's Gorge Park's Barlup Rhododendron Garden...the list is growing every year. Our green thumb prints are everywhere! Probably on the Silver plate as well....

ENJOYING THE “PRESENT” IN GARDENING

ADAPTED FROM RACHEL DE THAME IN JUNE 2026 “THE GARDEN “



1. Accept that no garden will ever be “finished”.

Gardening is a continuous process. There will always be another plant to add, another job to do, or another improvement to make. Trying to achieve perfection only leads to frustration.

2. Don’t compare your garden to social media.

Many social platforms create the illusion that everyone else’s garden is more beautiful or further ahead. Even professionals struggle – the polished images rarely show the hard work behind them.

3. Planning is important, but don’t let it dominate your enjoyment.

Gardeners naturally think ahead to next season, the next planting, or the next project. While planning is part of gardening, it shouldn’t prevent you from appreciating what you have already accomplished.

4. Many gardening tasks aren’t as urgent as they seem.

We often create unnecessary pressure by thinking we’re late planting or pruning. In reality, most seasonal tasks have a much wider window than we imagine.

5. Modern life encourage us to always look ahead.

Constant news, online shopping and social media have conditioned us to focus on the future. That mindset can rob us of the peace and restorative value that gardening offers.

6. Slow down and savor today’s garden.

One of gardening’s greatest gifts is its ability to provide relief from daily stress. Rather than rushing to see the next bloom, take time to notice each flower. Remember, simply sitting, looking and enjoying what you have accomplished is “more than enough”.

THE 2026 CHELSEA GARDEN SHOW

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT AND WERE TOO BUSY IN YOUR OWN GARDEN

The 2026 RHS Chelsea Garden show was held at the historic Royal Hospital Chelsea in London from May 19 - May 23, 2026. This special event featured over 400 exhibits including show gardens, balcony and container gardens.

HIGHLIGHTS

- . The King's Foundation Curious Garden: A royal-themed space created in collaboration with King Charles III and David Beckham
- . Lady Garden Foundation Garden: The "Silent No More" garden designed to promote public conversations about gynecological health
- . The Boodles Garden: Designed by Catherine McDonald, highlighting bold color trends and inspired by Royal historic palaces
- . The Great Pavilion: Showcasing rare plant collections, the RHS Florist of the Year awards and a spotlight on sustainable gardening practices



HIGHLIGHTS AND TRENDS

DESIGN THEMES: Heavy influence of Japanese gardening techniques, naturalistic British wildlife planting, and wetland restoration.



FEATURE STRUCTURES: Integration of functional elements like solar powered pergolas, water-filtration systems and sheltered spaces.



PLANTING TRENDS: High popularity of "edimentals" (edible ornamental plants), wild grasses and plants used for natural dyes.



TECH AND FUN: Sparks of controversy over AI-assisted garden designs, contrasted by the playful lifting of the traditional garden gnome ban.



RHODODENDRONS AT THE 2026 CHELSEA GARDEN SHOW

THE BLUE DIAMOND GARDEN CENTERS

MICRO-CLIMATE PLACEMENT: The rhododendrons were deliberately placed within the “exotic shade-loving” zone of the walk through layout.

THE DESIGN PURPOSE: Large, established specimen rhododendrons were used as architectural backdrop anchors. They provided immediate mature height and heavy structural framing next to giant tree ferns, banana plants and a waterfall feature. They shone directly against bold, tropical green foliage plants and nearby cottage-style perennials.



CELEBRATING THE “YAKS” AT THE CHELSEA GARDEN SHOW....2026

The “Seven Dwarfs” series and prominent European cultivars dominated the *R. yakushmanum* presence in the 2026 show. Their structure and cushion-form shaping anchored small-space and container-themed displays.



HAPPY

The 2026 show leaned heavily toward texture and structure. The yaks are highly praised for the unique indumentum and their dwarf, compact nature.



GRUMPY



DOPEY



SNEEZY



GOLDEN TORCH



DREAMLAND

The yaks are a small-space solution. They took center stage in the 2026 balcony and container category. Their form and mature size allows urban gardeners to enjoy massive blooms without an overgrown bush.



PERCY WISEMAN

SEPTEMBER IN THE RHODODENDRON GARDEN

A QUICK REVIEW

September is a critical transition month for rhododendrons as they are setting next year's flower buds and preparing for winter dormancy.

Do a "bud check": Learn to distinguish between fat, rounded flower buds and slim, pointed leaf buds. One can then preview next spring's blooms.

Watering rules for September: Deep watering in September prevents winter burn, especially before the ground freezes.

Fertilizer Warning: Stop applying nitrogen-rich fertilizers now to avoid tender new growth that will get zapped by frost.

Mulching Upgrade: Add a fresh 2-to-3 inch layer of coarse bark mulch or pine needles to conserve moisture and protect shallow roots.



MODERN GENETICS AND RHODODENDRON HYBRIDS

AI

Modern DNA sequencing is completely dismantling traditional rhododendron taxonomy. For over a century, gardeners and botanists categorized the plant entirely by their physical traits. If two plants looked alike, breeders assumed they were closely related.

Genetics is revealing that the family tree looks completely different “under the hood”.

Exposing “Imposter Hybrids”

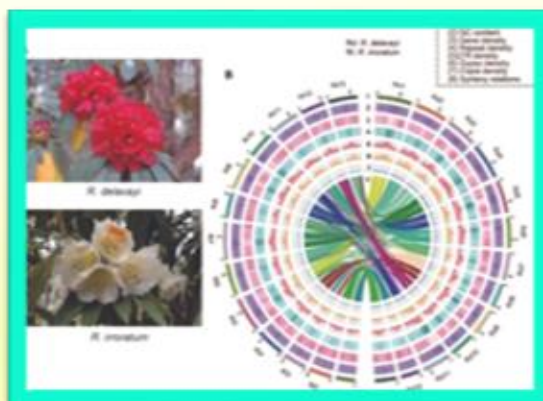
Historically, a hybrid’s parentage was tracked purely by paper records or physical traits. DNA profiling frequently reveals that iconic, award-winning nursery hybrids are not actually what their original cross logs claim. Some registered multi-generational crosses are proving to be the result of accidental, rogue open-pollination by insects rather than the breeder’s intended parent.

Mapping “Ghost” DNA in the Wild

Rhododendrons hybridize naturally with incredible ease in wild zones like the Himalayas and southwestern China. Whole-genome resequencing data has exposed extensive historical “reticulate evolution” – where distinct species crossed thousands of years ago, merged, and split again. Many plants we classified as unique “wild species” are actually ancient, stable natural hybrids carrying the hidden genetic signatures of long-extinct parental lineages.

Unlocking the Blueprint for Perfect Hybrids

Instead of waiting a decade for a seedling to mature and bloom, modern hybridizers use genetic mapping to peek at the plant’s future instantly. Scientists have mapped the specific multi-gene networks orchestrating anthocyanin pigment synthesis and winter hardiness. This allows breeders to screen tiny seedlings for precise flower colors or cold-tolerance genes via laboratory multi-omics before they ever touch the field.



BRIGHT NEW ORANGE RHODODENDRON SPECIES



A joint team of scientists led by the National Research and Innovation Agency has discovered a new species of rhododendron in the mountains of Central Sulawesi, Indonesia. The newly identified species features vibrant orange funnel-shaped flowers and has been given the name *R. yombuwurii*. It features semi-upright flower clusters. The plant is a slender, tree-dwelling (epiphytic) shrub that grows semi-upright or horizontally.

The species is named after the late Reverend Yombu Wuri, a prominent religious and customary leader of the local Pamona tribe.

- A. *Rhododendron yombuwurii* thriving and flowering beneath a canopy of a small tree
- B. A photo of the newly discovered specimen
- C. Flower bud of *Rhododendron yombuwurii*



RECENT STUDIES INVOLVING RHODODENDRONS

AI

Recent studies highlight advances in rhododendron hybridization, focusing on breeding varieties with enhanced root rot resistance, sun tolerance and drought resilience. Additionally, research maps are noting the environmental impact of ongoing climate change on their global distribution. A third study is exploring medicinal properties of the rhododendrons unique terpenoid compounds.

DISEASE AND CLIMATE

. Breeding programs are successfully crossing tough, native species with garden hybrids to develop plants that withstand root rot, lace bugs and atmospheric drought. Research shows that relatively low humidity during heatwaves is the most critical threat to current varieties.

SUN AND PIGMENTATION ADAPTATION

. Botanists have found that rhododendrons use varying levels of anthocyanins and carotenoids as “sunscreens”. This allows scientists to map exactly how species from different climates protect themselves against cold or light.

GLOBAL HABIT SHIFTING

. Predictive modeling indicates that while temperature and precipitation will cause habitat reductions for some species (*R. arboreum*), others will slightly expand as their distribution will shift northwestward.

MEDICINAL CHEMISTRY

. Pharmacological reviews highlight the isolation of over 113 unique terpenoid compounds from rhododendrons. These plant extracts and phytochemicals show promise in scientific research for their anti-inflammatory, antioxidant and cardioprotective properties.

ANTHOCYANINS – WATER SOLUBLE PLANT PIGMENTS THAT GIVE FRUITS AND VEGETABLES THEIR VIVID RED, PURPLE AND BLUE COLORS, AND ARE POWERFUL ANTIOXIDANTS

CAROTENOIDS – NATURAL YELLOW, ORANGE AND RED ORGANIC PIGMENTS PRODUCED BY PLANTS, ALGAE AND VARIOUS FUNGI

TERPENOIDS – MASSIVE AND DIVERSE NATURALLY OCCURRING ORGANIC CHEMICALS, FOUND PRIMARILY IN PLANTS, AND FORM THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF ESSENTIAL OILS, PIGMENTS AND VITAMINS



RHODODENDRONS OF THE YEAR FOR 2026

NORTHWEST USA AND CANADA



ELEPIDOTE RHODODENDRON: 'GOLFER'

Flower pale, widely funnel-campanulate, wavy lobes, 2" across, dome shaped trusses, holds 12-13 flowers, leaves apiculate cuneate base, 3" long margins slightly recurved, glossy, retained 2-3 years, silver tomentum on new growth, likes afternoon filtered shade, typical height 2' in 10 years, cold hardy to -10F, -23 C.

Warren Berg



LEPIDOTE RHODODENDRON: 'SHAMROCK'

Flower brilliant green with strong yellow green spotting, flower is tubular, funnel shaped, 1 1/3" across, fading to light yellow, flat truss with 8-9 flowers, blooms early to midseason, leaves elliptic, apiculate apex, with cuneate base, 1 3/4" leaves yellowish green, retained 2 years, dense, spreading plant habit, 2 feet in 10 years, cold hardy to -15F, -21 C.

Ticknor



EVERGREEN AZALEA : 'BLUE DANUBE'

Flower strong reddish-purple with vivid reddish-purple midribs and deep red spotting, funnel-shaped, 1 1/2" to 3/4" across, inflorescence 2-3 flowered, Blooms mid season, leaves 2" long, bright green, upright, spreading habit, grows to 4" in 10 years, cold hardy to -10 F, -23 C.

Van Hecke



DECIDUOUS AZALEA: R. SCHLIPPENBACHII

Flower pale to deep pink, rarely white, broadly rotate-funnel shaped, inflorescence 3-6 flowered, blooms early mid-season, leave broadly obovate, up to 4 1/2", in whorls at branch tips, deciduous, grows to about 4' in 10 years, plant and bud hardy to -20F -29 C, native species growing in Korea, North East Manchuria and Eastern Russia.



SCIENTISTS ARE TRANSFORMING AN INVASIVE ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS INTO A HIGH-TECH SOLUTION FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

In not realizing the characteristics of *Rhododendron ponticum*, the 18th century wealthy estate owners in Ireland and the UK introduced this plant to beautify their landscapes. Today that choice has backfired dramatically. The plant spread aggressively across natural habitats, and growing into impenetrable toxic thickets that block out sunlight. In Scotland, this invasive species has driven an estimated 95% of the habitat into poor condition.

The breakthrough came when researchers began harvesting these invasive rhododendrons and converting them into BIOCHAR – a stable, charcoal-like substance created by heating biomass in the absence of oxygen.

The process permanently locks away the carbon stored within the wood, preventing it from decomposing and releasing back into the atmosphere.

The intense heat completely breaks down any lingering chemical herbicides used during forest clearance, making the final material entirely safe to apply back into woodland soil.

By selling the resulting carbon credits to corporate buyers on the green market, the conservationists are generating a steady stream of revenue. For the first time, the invasive plant itself is generating the money needed to fund its own removal and bankroll the restoration of native woodlands.





HUGELKULTURE IS A PERMACULTURE GARDENING METHOD THAT BUILDS RAISED BEDS BY BURYING ROTTING WOOD AND ORGANIC MATTER UNDER SOIL:

AS THE WOOD DECOMPOSES OVER TIME, IT ACTS AS A MASSIVE SPONGE THAT RETAINS MOISTURE, PROVIDES A SLOW-RELEASE OF NUTRIENTS, AND CREATES NATURAL AIR POCKETS FOR PLANT ROOTS.

- 1. BASE LAYER (LOGS):** Large heavy logs form the foundation. They act as the primary water reservoir and slow-release nutrient engine.
- 2. MIDDLE LAYER (BRANCHES AND TWIGS):** Medium branches and smaller brushy prunings fill the larger gaps to stabilize the structure.
- 3. NITROGEN LAYER (GREEN MATTER):** Turf, grass clippings, leaves and green compost are packed over the wood to accelerate the breakdown process.
- 4. TOP LAYER (SOIL AND COMPOST):** finished topsoil and compost cover the entire mound (typically 6 – 12 inches deep) to provide an immediate growing medium for plant roots.

- . ABOVE GROUND MOUNDS:** built directly on top of the turf. This method is ideal for area with poor drainage, heavy clay or bedrock close to the surface
- . INGROUND TRENCHES:** The base logs are buried in a dug-out trench, keeping the final height of the mound lower and more contained.
- . HYBRID BEDS:** A shallow trench is dug and the excavated soil is saved to cap the mound at the end. This is the most common approach.
- . LONG-TERM BREAKDOWN:** over a span of 20+ years, diagrams show the internal wood transforming into rich, spongy humus, causing the mound to naturally settle and flatten out over time.

IS IT AN AZALEA OR RHODODENDRON?

ADAPTED FROM DON WALLACE AT SINGING TREE NURSERIES

Most people will look at the size of the leaf to make the call. A small leaves shrub will be called an azalea, while the larger, broader-leaved plant will be identified as a rhododendron. It is important to remember that azaleas are actually rhododendrons. They belong in the subgenus *Pentanthera* or the subgenus *Tsutsusi*. Many are evergreen, while others are deciduous. Rhododendrons are classified as either *lepidote* or *elepidote*, that is, with scales or without scales.



PENTANTHER



TSUTUSI



LEPIDOTE



ELEPIDOTE

Azalea flowers tend to have 5 stamens and 5 lobes
Rhododendrons will usually have 10 or more stamens

Azaleas have hairs that grow parallel to the midrib on the undersurface of the leaf
These hairs are never found on rhododendron leaves

Many azaleas are deciduous, while rhododendrons are evergreen

DO YOU HAVE AN ENKIANTHUS IN YOUR GARDEN?

Enkianthus perulatus (white) is a slow-growing deciduous shrub featuring pure white spring bells and brilliant scarlet autumn foliage. It thrives in mild coastal microclimates and requires an acidic, well-drained organic-rich soil and partial shade. It is a perfect companion shrub for rhododendrons.



PLANT CHARACTERISTICS

FLOWERS: dainty, nodding, urn-shaped pure white blooms appearing before the leaves

FOLIAGE: bright green leaves in summer, turning scarlet, or burgundy red in fall

SIZE: Reaches 4-6 feet tall and wide at a growth rate of 3-6 inches per year

FAMILY: belongs to the Ericaceae (heath family, along with rhododendrons and blueberries)

GROWING REQUIREMENTS

HARDINESS: Zones through USDA 6-8, ideal for sheltered microclimates

SOIL: acidic, rich, evenly moist, well draining soil high in organic matter

SUNLIGHT: prefers full sun to partial or dappled shade, with afternoon sun protection

MAINTENANCE: low maintenance, minimal pruning



**Volunteers make a difference....
DEADHEADING AT THE BARLUP GARDEN**



THANKS CALVIN

THE STORY OF THE DEXTER HYBRIDS

Adapted from Heritage Museums and Gardens

In 1921, Charles Owen Dexter, a 60- year- old- textile manufacturer, was told by his Doctor that he had only two years to live due to an illness. He was advised to retire and find a relaxing outdoor hobby. He bought a 76-acre property on Cape Cod known as Shawme Farm.

Defying his medical diagnosis, Dexter lived on the property for another 22 years until his death in 1943. During this time, he revolutionized American horticulture by cross-breeding standard, cold-hardy New England rhododendrons with delicate, fragrant species from Asia.



Scintillation



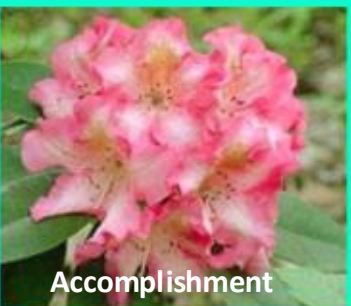
Janet Blair



Dexter's Purple

Dexter's primary breeding goals were hardiness, clear bright colors, strong fragrance and large showy blossoms. Before his work, most New England rhododendrons featured standard mauves, purples and whites. Dexter broke that mold by introducing:

- . Enormous, frilly blooms
- . A vibrant color palette ranging from pure white and pale yellow to
- . Strong, sweet fragrances that were rare in cold-hardy varieties
- . High resistant to harsh New England winters, hardy to -10 F



Accomplishment



Gigi



Lavender Princess

**DO
YOU
KNOW
THE
NAME
OF
THE
MOST
NORTHERLY
PUBLIC
GARDEN
WITH
RHODODENDRONS?**



**IT IS WELL
ABOVE THE
ARCTIC
CIRCLE**



**It is the Arctic-Alpine
Botanic Garden in
Tromsø,
Norway**



**This garden features a specialized
Rhododendron Valley growing over 60
different species and cultivars that
thrive in the midnight sun and unique
coastal microclimate**

RHODODENDRONS... LACE BUG...POLLINATORS



The best way to treat lace bugs on rhododendrons without harming pollinators is to use a targeted organic spray combined with cultural controls timed perfectly to avoid when bees are visiting flowers. One must never spray when the rhododendrons are in bloom.



The best pollinator-safe treatments include: insecticidal soap and neem oil. These kill lace bugs on contact but have no residual toxicity to bees once dry. A forceful water blast on the underside of the leaves will physically knock them off and kill the wingless nymphs. Horticultural oil dilution of 1-2 % will smother the overwintered eggs and young nymphs before the plant blooms.



Spray post bloom after all the flower petals have dropped. Target the leaf undersides as that is where they live and feed exclusively. Apply late in the evening when bees are back n their hives, allowing the spray to dry before morning.

Green lace wings, ladybugs, assassin bugs and predatory mites are the beneficial insects that eat lace bugs.

THE GOOD...THE BAD...THE UGLY IN TODAY'S RHODODENDRON WORLD

Today's rhododendron world is a tale of botanical triumph and ecological struggle.

THE GOOD: The sheer beauty and diversity of this genus are unmatched. From towering fragrant Himalayan species to tiny alpine dwarfs, they offer endless fascination for collectors.



THE BAD: Climate change is turning once-easy shrubs into a more high maintenance hobby. Rising summer heat causes severe sun scorch, while milder winters have allowed pests like the invasive lace bug to thrive. These tiny insects pierce the leaves and suck out the sap, leaving them stippled and yellow. Gardeners are soon going to have to switch to heat tolerant varieties or step up their pest management.



THE UGLY: The dark underbelly of the rhododendron world features invasive outbreaks and devastating diseases. The aggressive *Rhododendron ponticum* dominates parts of the UK, destroying native ecosystems. Meanwhile, soil-born *Phytophthora* (a water mold) ravages root systems, and powdery mildew causes sudden, catastrophic leaf drop.



GROWING RHODODENDRONS IN POTS

LOIS BLACKMORE



Roy and I purchased our property in 1975 when our home was being built. We sit on 3.2 acres of mountainous rock and large Douglas firs. We were familiar with rhododendrons and decided that they would be a perfect fit for such a site. Starting at the roadside, we planted many of the hybrids that were available at the time, not really being familiar with the species rhododendrons. Gradually the front and side yards were at capacity.

As our home sits very close to a cliff at the back of the house, we built a very large deck and continued with our passion for rhododendrons. That meant growing them in some kind of container.

What we have learned is that the best of all mixes is straight bark mulch. It is lightweight, porous and seems to replicate the natural growing conditions of the mountains in China and India. It holds water well and allows the roots to expand as need be. We apply a rhododendron fertilizer in the spring and water frequently on hot summer days. We have lost very few during the winter months as we let nature take its course.

One of the advantages comes when it is time to move the pots if need be. They are easily pulled along the boards of the deck to a new location. We have moved some as we have noticed that some areas get more frost and wind. In total, we have lost less than five due to weather conditions in the fourteen years the deck has been built.



RHODENZA 2026

**OCTOBER 29 –
NOVEMBER 1
NEW ZEALAND**

**RHODODENDRON
ASSOCIATION**

**CHRISTCHURCH
SOUTH ISLAND**

**GARDEN TOURS OF
PRIVATE AND PUBLIC
GARDENS**

**EDUCATIONAL
WORKSHOPS AND
PRESENTATIONS**

**ENJOYING LOCAL
HOSPITALITY**





ESQUIMALT GORGE PARK

THANK YOU CALVIN

The Jim Barlup Legacy Garden is situated in Esquimalt Gorge Park. It was an important place for the Xwsepsum (Esquimalt) and Songhees Nations.

Esquimalt Gorge Park was established in 1905 as the BC Electric Gorge Park, with Japanese Tea Gardens, an amusement park and a floating sampan tearoom. Unfortunately, the Japanese Gardens were destroyed during anti-Japanese sentiments during WWII.

The gardens declined for many years in the 1950's, until the Kinsmen Club assisted with its revival. In 2006, the Township of Esquimalt took over as owners of this park. The gently rolling landscape of the park allows for a variety of of forested areas, perennial borders, Japanese cherry trees as well as many fine heritage trees. In recent years, a large community center was created, adding to the ambience of the park.

In 2019, it became the site of the Jim Barlup Legacy Garden. With the help of 34 Victoria Rhododendron Society volunteers, 79 of Jim's hybrid rhododendrons were planted. It was to the delight of many that both Jim and Judy Barlup were able to witness the initial plantings. Several more plantings have taken place, with the next planting scheduled to take place in 2027.

WHY WE HAVE GARDENS

Plants are essential for life on earth. They make their food through photosynthesis using sunlight, water and carbon dioxide. Trees, flowers, grass and shrubs provide oxygen, which humans and animals need to breathe. They offer habitats and food for many creatures. They come in various shapes, sizes and colors adding beauty to our surroundings. Taking care of plants is important to maintain the balance of nature and to ensure a healthy environment for living things



A garden is a peaceful place filled with flowers, plants and trees. It is where nature's beauty blooms, with colorful petals and lush green leaves. In a garden, one can hear the chirping of birds and the buzzing of bees. It is a place to relax and unwind, surrounded by blooming flowers and the smell of fresh air. Gardens come in all shapes and sizes, from small backyard patches to vast botanical wonders. Whether it is a rhododendron garden or a flower garden, the joy of tending to plants is universal



Nature is my favorite place to be. It doesn't judge, it doesn't rush, it just is. The trees, the flowers, the wind, the birds – everything in nature has its own way of living. Nature reminds me to breathe, to be present and to appreciate the little things. It teaches me that growth takes time, just like a seed turns into a big tree. Nature makes me feel alive as I am surrounded by greenery and fresh air. Nature is not a place to visit, it is home.



2026 Fall into Gardening

Gardening on Vancouver Island is Different

MARS (Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society), **NRS** (Nanaimo Rhododendron Society), and **VIMGA** (Vancouver Island Master Gardeners Association) are pleased to offer a day of education and enjoyment with internationally recognized gardening experts.

Tickets: \$30 in advance or \$35 at the door

See NRS website for details about how to register: <http://nanaimorhodos.ca/>

- Date: **Sunday, September 27, 2026**
- Location: Qualicum Beach Civic Centre
747 Jones St. Qualicum Beach, B.C.
- Time: 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Speakers:

John Deniseger & Glen Jamieson: *Gardening on Vancouver Island is Different*

Janis Matson: *Vancouver Island's Diversity: The Uniqueness and Distinctiveness of our Green Spaces*

Linda Gilkeson: *Harvest More from Your Garden All Year Round*

Christine Quist: *Starting Native Plants from Seed: A Practical Demo for Home Gardeners*

Paul Spriggs: *Cracks and Crevices: The Art of Rock and Crevice Gardening*

Information Booths:



Refreshments: Coffee, tea, and treats will be provided.

Please bring your own bag lunch.

PICNIC 2026

AT THE HOME AND GARDEN OF STEPHEN AND MARJORIE BRICE

Our annual picnic is one of the “of the best meetings of the year” as the three enticements of eating, drinking and being merry, call us to partake. BUT, and it is a big BUT, the lure of going with at least one new rhododendron is a lure that rhododendron collectors cannot miss. Thanks goes to all who help to make this annual event such a success.



PHOTOS THANKS TO NADINE!



2
0
2
6





YUM...YUM...YUM

...



CONGRATULATIONS SEAN AND BRENDA



**THANK YOU
MIKE**



**THANK YOU
BRYAN**



ONGOING MAINTENANCE AT THE HCP

**PATHS RAKED
AND
READY
FOR THE
ARTS AND MUSIC
FESTIVAL
AT THE HCP
AUGUST
8 AND 9**



***R. auriculatum* in bloom
August 1, 2026
HCP**



Thanks Calvin



THANKS CALVIN

A SLOW DAY AT THE HCP...



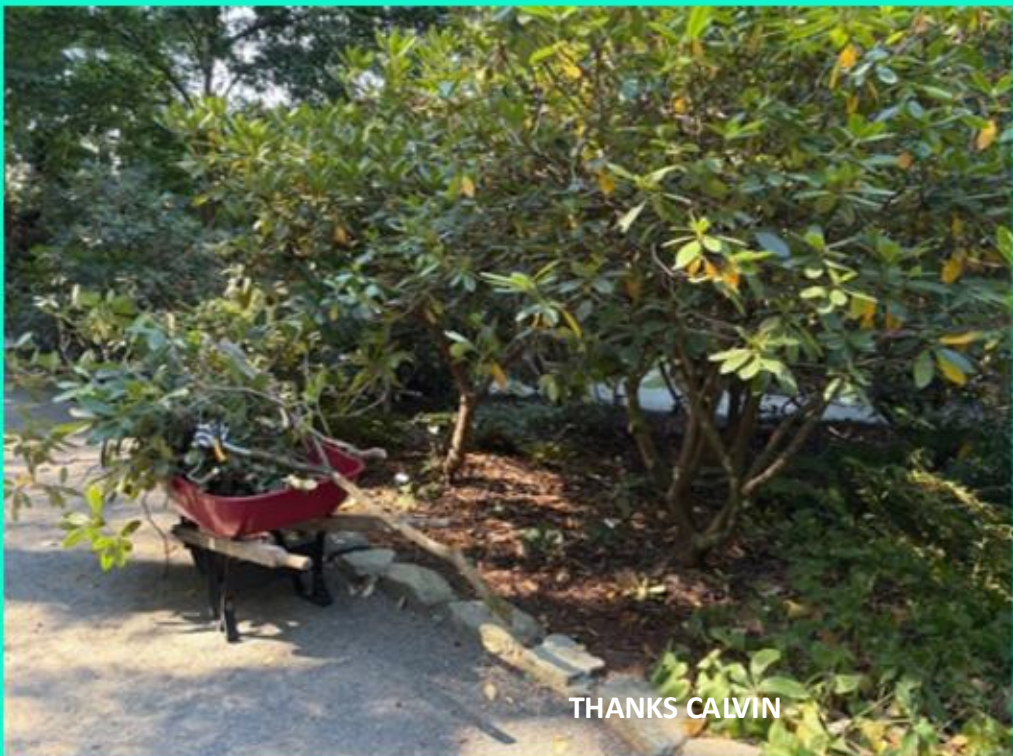
WEEDING...A CONSTANT PROCESS...THANK YOU



THANKS CALVIN...



EVERY WEEK...ESPECIALLY WEDNESDAY...DEDICATION



THANKS CALVIN



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KEY CONTRIBUTORS

I like nonsense,
it wakes up the
brain cells.
Fantasy is
a necessary
ingredient in
living. It's a way
of looking at
life through the
wrong end of a
telescope, which
is what I do, and
that enables you
to laugh at life's
realities.

— Dr. Seuss —

