

The Yak

Newsletter of **Fraser South
Rhododendron Society** a
Chapter of the American
Rhododendron Society



Volume 15

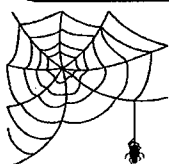
Number 2

February, 2002

**Fraser South Rhododendron
Society is a chapter of the
American Rhododendron
Society. It meets on the third
Wednesday of each month
(except July and August)
Meetings now held in the
United Church Hall, Langley,
5673 200th St.
7.30 p.m.**

FSRS 2002 Officers

Pres.- Dr. Mike Bale
604 853 8839
Sec. - Wendy Sellars
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Treas. - Trev Badminton
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1. ARS Home Page:

<http://www.rhododendron.org>

2. RandA Newsletter:

[http://members.aol.com/
RandANews/news.html](http://members.aol.com/RandANews/news.html)

Lots of excellent Links to other
Rhodo sites in both of the above.
The ARS Home Page is developing
a data base which includes informa-
tion on both species and hybrids.

February 20, 2002

Langley United Church
5673 - 200th

**7:15 come early enough to check out the
plants for sale**

please support our growers who go to great effort to
select and bring suitable plants

1. Colleen Forster - some companion plants
2. Vern Finley - what's in bloom in our garden

3. Bill Dale

The Abkhazi Garden As It Was
Pictures with musical accompaniment



Yakalendar



CONVENTIONS 2002

April 17 - 21

ARS Annual Convention
Georgia

held jointly with Azalea Society of
America Convention

May 17 - 19

Rhododendron Conference
Edinburgh, Royal Botanic
Garden

Sept. 20-22

Western Regional Conference
Bellingham

This close - we should ALL be able
to go - every day

February 20, 2002

Note - we are reviving our 'pre
speaker' informational chats:

Colleen on companion plantings
Vern for "Show and Tell"

There will be plants - both rhodos
and pertinent companions plants
for sale.

Speaker Bill Dale knew the
Abkhazi Garden very well, and
also was a friend of Peggy,
Princess Abkhazi (who, I believe
was a concert pianist in her own
right) Bill is an excellent photog-
rapher and this presentation of
'pictures with piano accompani-
ment' will make for a very special
evening.

March 20, 2002

FSRS regular meeting

Sat. April 20, 2002

FSRS Parking Lot Show and Sale-
United Church Lot, Langley

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THE 15 COMMANDMENTS OF GARDEN TOURING

1. Thou shalt observe most carefully the agreed hours of visitation, neither entering before the appointed hour nor parting late. Nay, even if thou dost become perilously lost and grievously confounded in the uncharted lanes of the Kingdom of the Fraser Valley.
2. Thou shalt not park thy vehicle on thy host's neighbour's turf, nor obstruct his neighbour's carriageway, nor utter in a loud voice to thy host "Tis shameful, sir, that thy neighbour's garden cannot more closely resemble thine own."
3. If there be a surfeit of visitors in a confined garden space, thou shalt endure outside in patience while waiting thy turn to enter there.
4. Thou shalt not enter into yon gentle garden accompanied by snarling churlish cur, nor squalling babe nor unruly child, lest they aggrieve thy host and trample his prettie plants.
5. Thou shalt not stand within earshot of thy host, point to a prettie plant and declare in a loud voice, "Ah yes, I grow this prettie plant too, but mine looks ten times as grand as this poor wee thing" But if thy tongue should slip and thy host seems passing sad or sorely vexed at thine utterance, thou must not further declare, "Fear not, poor wretch, perhaps my prettie plant is more advanced in years than thy paltry wee thing."
6. Thou shalt not utter Botanical Latin unless thou hast been addressed in Botanical Latin first. And if thou and thy host agree that uttering Botanical Latin is a passing agreeable thing, thou shalt not deny those waiting nearby the opening to address thy host in common tongue.
7. Thou shalt not covet thy host's Rhododendron Babylon nor his Cardiocrinum giganteum nor his Hosta Fire and Ice.
8. Thou shalt not tread on any small prettie plants placed artfully amidst the stepping stones by thy host, and if thou dost tread heavily there, thou must flee with great haste before thy host shall sound his alarm
9. Thou shalt not sup nor drink unbid in thy host's garden, neither on thine own prepared sustenance nor on the fruits and roots and berries prettily tended by thy host
10. Thou shalt not spit in thy host's garden, nor utter oaths, nor indulge in the pleasures of the demon tobacco, lest thy host disapprove and cast thee out.
11. Thou shalt not pinch nor pluck, nor prune nor nip nor cut nor hack nor rip nor clip, nor otherwise make stealth with prettie plants growing in thy host's garden, unless thy host has offered them to thee freely
12. Thou shalt not gaze untoward into thy host's castle windows, nor make loud mention of his handsome furnishings, nor pass through his threshold, unless he bids you enter there.
13. Thou shalt not demand to relieve thyself in thy host's private chamber. Nay, nor in his prettie bushes nor his handsome fountain. Nay, nay!
14. Thou shalt not express thy displeasure of this plant or that effect, lest thy host be standing nearby, unseen yet awares, Nay, instead thou shalt declare in a loud voice, "My, what a passing handsome marriage of hues most brilliantly violet and orange is this brave planting here!" And whenst thou dost utter these words, thou must not smirk nor titter, nor wink thine eye.
15. Thou shalt bid thy host kind adieu and most sincere thanks for deigning to open his garden gates and admit thee therein.

(With some apologies to Janet Davis, whose original article was printed in Toronto Gardens, 1996)

January Meeting

What is it about January meetings that brings out the worst of the weather ?? - or is it Annual General Meetings that does that? The AGM showed us to have be financially stable , at present with a positive bank balance of slighter over \$2,000, and a comfortable term deposit of \$10,000. We reminded ourselves that we aere not a money making organization, and that some of these funds might be put to good use. Our new executive will have the fun of working that out.

Meet your newly elected members :
President Mike Bale

Vice Pres. Coleen Forster
Treas. Trev Badminton
3 yr. director Dalen Bayes

The remaining Directors :
one year left of term : Wenonah
March

Two years remaining : Norma
Senn

Our very able secretary - Wendy
Sellars remains on place. Heads of
other committees will be ratified, or
appointed by your new executive. Be
ppared to give them your support.

The Yak can now be e
mailed to you as a pdf file.
We encourage you to
accept it this way - save
postage. Please e mail me
at: empty@shaw.ca if you
wish to receive your copy
this way - with your cor-
rect e mail address
please. Mike

FSRS GARDEN TOURS , 2002

1. Members Garden Tours:

This year the Member Garden
Tours are to be organized by the
Peace Arch Chapter members,
and details will be distributed as
soon as they beconme available,
You may recall that in previous
years this has been hosted by the
Fraser South and by the Fraser
Valley Chapters.

2. Species Study Days - It's On

Those lucky souls
who have signed
up for this superb
opportunity will
hear details
directly. The rest
of you ? - too bad



3. Mothers Day Garden Tour

This event has been postponed
this year in order to give a respite
to the garden hosts. Hopefully we
will be able to host this next year
with renewed energy.

4. Coach Tour To Victoria

Please set aside the weekend of
May 18th and May 19th for a bus
tour to Victoria to see some of the
spectacular gardens there. The
Victoria Chapter has indicated a
willingness to participate and
provide hospitality. They are
keen to visit our area and see
some of the gardens in the lower
mainland. Watch for details.



From Your New President

The new executive is
appreciative of the opportunity
to represent Fraser South Chap-
ter, and we are all humbled by
being elected by acclamation !!.
We are all very aware that our
contribution will have been
made much easier as the result
of the efforts of past members.

The Chapter is deeply
indebted to Trevor Badminton
for his leadership over the past
year, and also to Bobby Ogdon
for filling in as a director at the
last minute despite his other
numerous committments.

We all enjoyed the Christ-
mas Party immensely and special
thanks are due to Bev. Clay for
once again providing a wonder-
fully cooked turkey. Bev has
generously prepared and cooked
the turkey for every Christmas
party since our inauguration.
We are also deeply indebted to
Sue Klapwijk and Diane Scott for
their organizational and coersive
skills. Many thanks to Dave
Sellars for his new and improved
hybridization game, and to Les
Clay for his perennial slide
presentation teaser.

Mike Bale

There is a Japanese web site sporting some lovely pictures - well worth the difficulty of sorting it out! - When you bring it up - you will get a drop down menu suggesting you load the Japanese alphabet - you can click no and the site will still load. Along the side are some heiroglyphios in reverse white on green - click there, and then go along to underlined 'words' and click - and there are your pictures - most have a floating sign of the name in English. The name of each picture shows on your bottom tool bar, too, amd MOST are recognizable. This is an "eat your heart out" collection ! <http://ekihi.co.jp/net/flame1.htm>

YOUR NEW PRESIDENT SPEAKS

One of the executive's primary goals this year is to increase our membership. This is needed to provide a foundation for new ideas, new gardens and new leadership. We hope to do this by revitalizing our monthly chapter meetings and will strive to make these evenings energetic, fun and informative. In addition, we propose to introduce a variety of new activities which might include a breakfast garden meeting and a wine and cheese get together one summer evening. We propose to start the meetings as scheduled at 7:30 but would encourage everyone to arrive early in order to review the plant material which will be available prior to the meeting. These plants will be made available by our grower members and will be hard to find and rare plants which are not readily available elsewhere. The plants will include both rhododendrons and a fine collection of companion plants. This activity will require considerable effort on the part of the growers and your participation and support is needed to make this venture a success.

The meetings will commence with a brief business session and will then be followed by a short talk on companion plants by either Colleen or Norma. Both of these members are experts in their field and great teachers. This presentation will be followed by a 'Show & Tell' session to be given by Vern Finley who always seems to be able to find exceptionally fine material from her garden. Vern's presentations are always a great joy and with permission, might be an excellent source of plant material. The featured speaker will generally begin at about 8.00 p.m. and last for about an hour. Following the main presentation there will be the usual raffle and door prizes followed by refreshments and an opportunity to review the plant sale and dollar table.

We hope that the membership will help support the executive by encouraging their friends, relatives and neighbours to come along as a guest completely free of charge and hope that they will be sufficiently interested to participate in the raffle and plant sale and may

even be tempted to become an associate.

Other activities planned for this season include the Species Study Days which will take place at the Species Foundation on March 2, March 23rd, April 27th and May 25th. These sessions will provide approximately 24 hours of tuition and instruction and a wonderful opportunity to visit the garden on four separate occasions throughout the blooming season.

The garden tour for this year will take place on the weekend of May 18th- 19th to Victoria. We have already confirmed the privilege of visiting some of the wonderful gardens there. Please make a note of the date and confirm your interest as soon as possible. ✓

The Peace Arch Chapter will be arranging weekly garden visits to members gardens in their area and details will be announced as soon as these have been formalized.

Another concern for the directors was to try and make Fraser South known as the friendly chapter. We would like to encourage everybody to introduce themselves to an unknown person whether this be a guest or another member so that everybody comes to feel welcome and a member of a congenial and hospitable group.

Finally if anyone suffers from any irritation, aggravation, frustration or inconsideration please bring it to the attention of one of the Directors who will try and resolve the issue. We may not know if we do not get the feedback

Lets work for a great gardening year.

Mike Bale

◆ Accommodation Wanted ◆
◆ At the present time, about eight ARS members from
◆ Vancouver Island will be travelling to the mainland to
◆ attend the Species Days, It would be a tremendous
◆ gesture of goodwill and friendship if members were
◆ willing to provide accommodation for the Friday night
◆ prior to the Study Days. This would greatly reduce
◆ the costs for their participation..
◆ Anyone willing to help out please contact Mike Bale
◆ 604 853 8839 (days) 604 853 4100 (24.hr) ◆

QUERCUS

Companion Plants



Family: Fagaceae (Oaks, Beech, Sweet Chestnut)

From a huge family of around 600 species almost exclusive to the Northern Hemisphere, there are sadly only a very few oaks that are truly happy in our area. Only 1 of the 10 Canadian species is native to B.C., and even that has a limited habitat. We are left to rely on imports from the eastern U.S. and Europe to furnish our boulevards and parks. That said, the ones that do flourish provide some magnificent specimens for our pleasure.

Oaks fall into 2 main categories – Red -with pointed lobes,



Leaf of red oak

and White -with rounded lobes.

White oak - logo of the National Trust



As a general rule, the white oaks are more suitable to the climates of California and the Mediterranean, some of which are even evergreen, or "live" oak. A notable exception is *Q. robur* (English Oak), which is not only suitable, but has actually naturalized in areas of Stanley Park and the UBC Endowment Lands. Selections have been made as *Cutleaf*, *Purpurea*, *Fastigiata*, *Pendula* and *Cornubia* (gold leaf), all of which are slower growing and just as happy here.

Our native *Q. garryana* (Garry Oak) is rare in cultivation because not unlike our native *Arbutus*, it prefers very well-drained, even rocky slopes. Other than isolated pockets on Sumas Mtn. and at Yale, it is confined to eastern

Vancouver Island.

Some eastern oaks that thrive here are *Q. palustris* (the Pin oak, named for the needle points on the leaf lobes), *Q. rubra* (Northern Red Oak), and *Q. phellos* (Willow Oak – with very un-oak-like long narrow leaves). The Pin Oak is actually quite tolerant of heavy wet soils, and don't we have plenty of those!

Now some words of caution – OAKS GET BIG and are not to be planted by the real-estate challenged!! An average size of the species mentioned is 70 feet tall, sometimes with an even greater spread. The Pin Oak is narrower, and has a characteristic branching habit, with the lower branches down-sweeping. Oak leaves are laced with tannin, the acid used in preserving leather, and when used extensively as mulch or compost, can lower the pH of the soil. Although slow to decompose, the soil could benefit from a bit of dolomite lime. The above species are known to transplant well, lacking the strong taproot of some others. Most are slow to establish as young plants, but settle in well with time.

There are some rare plantings of Turkey Oak (*Q. cerris*), Oriental Chestnut Oak (*Q. acutissima*), Scarlet Oak (*Q. coccinea*), Black Oak (*Q. velutina*) and others in the lower mainland, but these are not likely to be available in plant centers. If you want to try some and have a good well-drained sunny site, you may have to collect your own seed in faraway places, or have a distant relative send them.

Late to leaf out in spring, they cast a wonderful shade from a SW corner, and often retain those lovely russet leaves well into winter. Underplant with judgement – a tree that size uses a lot of water and may stress shallow rooted plants that are near without an auxilliary supply.



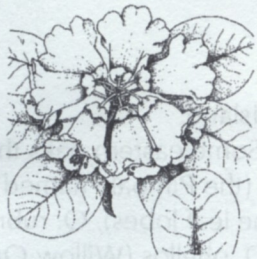
And so, from tiny acorns grow..... "Lovely russet leaves" ??

[Feb5/02]



A Rhododendron Primer

Book 2



is for *thymifolium*

SubSection Lapponica

As you can guess from the species epithet, *Rhododendron thymifolium* has small, narrow leaves. This is a small, slow-growing shrub that has an upright habit. It is reported to reach a meter in height, but is usually smaller than that. The leaves are very scaly on both sides. The upper leaf surface is dark green, the undersides of the leaves can be yellowish-brown in colour.



R. thymifolium
(Courtesy of the
Cox Encyclopaedia
of Species)

The funnel-shaped flowers, which are borne in ones and twos, are tiny, just under a cm in width and appear in late April to early May. Flower colour varies from pale lavender blue to deep purple. *R. thymifolium* is native to high elevations in Szechwan, and is reliably hardy to about -15C.

Norma Senn



is for 'Taurus'

'The Hon. Jean Marie de Montague' x *R. strigillosum*

6 ft., -5 F, EM, 4-5/4/4

This is a plant to be enjoyed all year. The plant has a beautiful growth habit; the leaves are large, dark green and are held for three years; new growth buds and flower buds are dark red and abundant.

Trusses are large, globe shaped and filled with waxy-textured, brilliant red flowers with moderately frilled margins and black spotting on the upper lobe.

This plant gains the full attention of garden browsers.



R. 'Taurus'
(or maybe it's 'Grace
Seabrook'?)

Vern Finley

IF's AND's or BUT's

IF - in this case stands for the **I**ntimidation **F**actor. Never heard of it, you say? Good, that's the way it should be. However, it might exist for a few new members. I can well remember my own early days in the Vancouver Chapter - listening in awe to the gurus of the chapter discussing relative merits of species vs. hybrids (What the heck were species??); tossing names -parent names, latin names, hybridizers names and names of famous gardens around like verbal confetti, and being as snowed under as if the 'confetti' were an actual blizzard. Is it possible that some of our new members feel this way about US ???!! They just don't US know yet - to realize how little of the huge reservoir of rhododendron knowledge we do know.

IF - this one stands for **I**n**F**ormation overload. After years of looking, listening and reading (and now even www'ing), rhodo lore becomes comfortable, and we forget that we might sound elitist to beginners. We don't mean to condescend; we are not trying to impress; and truly, as with most information, the more we have, the more we realize we don't have and want.

Don't be afraid to track our own experts down, and ask your questions. You are afraid of asking a stupid question ?? - one of our 'experts' reminds me that the only really stupid question is the one that isn't asked.

AND - I suspect this most commonly refers to the *cri de coeur* from your partner-
"A Nother Damned rhododendron ?????!!!!!! You haven't planted all those potted ones under the tree, and you get MORE ?" You say -" but it is a 'growing' hobby" (snigger, wink, wink) So it is. - the more you have, the more you want - people have even been known to move into larger acreages to accomodate their collection. Mind you - the 'true gardener' is more interested in his garden's '**A**rchitecture '**N** Design - he never gets caught in the excitement felt by the avid collector and rhodoholic.

BUT - This might stand for **Bea**U**T**iful species ? or a description of your garden - **B**ecoming a **U**niform Theme garden ? or is the garden exciting **B**ecause

of its **U**nusual **T**opography ?(think I'm pressing a little !) **BUT** you get the idea !

We are a 'specialist' club and not all of us are expert gardeners, or founts of knowledge re plants in general but we are all enthusiasts, and really are happy to share our love for the genus rhododendron

Mike

* * * * *

R. 'Albert Close'

This is another of Fraser's hybrids that was grown and named by Joseph Gable. It is of the same parentage as R. 'George Fraser' which it resembles in both leaf and flower, although I do believe that the flowers are slightly lighter on Albert Close.

When it bloomed for Gable he named it R. 'Albert Close' to honour Albert Close the chief propagator at the Department of Plant Introduction Station of Glenn Dale, Maryland. The Rhododendron is described by Gable as hardy: late, a shy bloomer, somewhat straggly and open with attractive foliage, flowers medium size, and bright rose pink with throat heavily spotted chocolate red, compact conical truss, can take sun (seed from Fraser).

The cuttings can be obtained from an 'Albert Close' growing at the Tyler Arboretum in Lima PA. The plant in the Tyler Arboretum garden had been obtained initially from Joseph Gable of Stewartstown, Pennsylvania. I obtained my plant from the nursery of Pat & Everett Jefferson at Qualicum Beach, B. C. It is now about 8 feet tall and cuttings have been taken to go to Ucluelet.

Bill Dale

ROOTSTALK

BY INDUMENTUM

January is a tough month in the garden. It's close enough to Spring for things to start to happen and expectations start to rise. But most of what happens are minor disasters. First the incessant rain shows up all the areas needing drainage. Then the winds blow detritus all over the place. Finally we get a huge dump of snow that breaks all the top branches of the *Magnolia grandiflora*. We have been lulled by a few mild winters in the recent past and the magnolia had put on huge growth spurts only for the wet clammy snow this year to stick to the paddle-like leaves and bring great branches crashing down. Maybe next Fall I will remember to provide some sort of supporting structure.

January is not a bad month for building simple garden structures. A Wedding Day rose that we had scrambling up a horse chestnut started to tilt in the wind and I realize that it was because the branches supporting the rose on the pollarded tree had rotted and broken. There was not enough leaf density to keep the tree alive. So I built an archway adjacent to the tree using twelve-foot, four-inch round treated poles, moved the rose over onto the arch and cut down the tree. Wedding Day is not readily available in Canada. It was my father's favourite rose and ours originated from a cutting from his garden in England.

Indumentum's Christmas challenge proved very difficult and the Yak Editor received only one correct entry, from Gael and John Dodd. The real items were the toad house, spider/wasp trapper and the birdbath heater. All are available from Lee Valley in Vancouver if you should be so inclined. The other items are not available yet but just need manufacturing and marketing. Gael and John win a 12-inch species rhododendron grown from seed collected by Peter Wharton in China. The choice will be between PW43, which is believed to be *R. glanduliferum* and *R. auriculatum*. I may find time to dig a few extra plants for the February meeting raffle, if the ground isn't frozen and I can find them under the snow!

Fraser South Committees for 2002

Library - Joan Bengough

Membership - Wenonah March

Programme - committee Colleen Forster, Dave Sellars, Norma Senn

Publicity - Wenonah and Alan March

Raffles - Dave Crabb

Reception - Phil Anderson

Refreshments - Diane Scott

Ways and Means - committee Sue Klapwijk, Diane Scott