

# The Yak

# Newsletter of the Fraser South Rhododendron Society

Volume 16 Number 8 October 2003



Fraser South Rhododendron Society  
is a chapter of the  
American Rhododendron Society

Meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. on the  
third Wednesday of each month at:  
United Church Hall  
5673 - 200th Street  
Langley BC

[www.flounder.ca/frasersouth](http://www.flounder.ca/frasersouth)

## 2003 Officers

President: Mike Bale  
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Secretary: Wendy Sellars  
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Treasurer: Trevor Badminton  
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Directors: Dalen Bayes  
Norma Senn  
Harold Fearing

Membership: Wenonah March

Newsletter: Brenda Macdonald  
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This Month's Meeting: Wednesday, October 15, 2003

Speaker: Margaret Cadwaladr

Topic: "In Veronica's Garden"  
A presentation on the history and  
development of the Milner Garden  
on Vancouver Island.

Companion Plants: Colleen Forster

Show & Tell: Vern Finley

## Quick Hits

### Companion Plants



This month, Colleen Forster's contribution on Companion Plants is on the hardy Fuchsia. The variety, attractiveness and utility of these plants is self-evident, but for me, it is the names. Who can resist the euphonious petitioning of plants called 'Alice Hoffman', 'Lottie Hobby', 'Mrs. Poppo', or (swoon) 'Mrs. Lovell Swisher'. No wonder I keep aching

to buy a 'Mavis Davis' rhododendron, even though I have been assured it is nothing to get excited about. Surely my 'Mrs. G. W. Leak' and 'Mrs. W. C. Slocock' need a new companion? After all, 'Hilda Nibletts' isn't quite the same class, and 'Sir Charles Lemon' is always so stuffy.

### Crawling 'Round the Web



Here is a collection of website links for most of the gardens visited by all those lucky enough to participate in the Rhodie Road Trip last spring. Read all about the trip in Norman Senn's article beginning on page 5.

[Kubota Garden](#)

[Van Veen's Nursery](#)

[Crystal Springs Garden](#)

[Portland Chinese Garden](#)

[Portland Japanese Garden](#)

[Bovee's Nursery](#)

[Elk Rock Garden](#)

[Lakewold Garden](#)



From the President

#### ARS DISTRICT I

Highlights of the District 1 Executive and Chapter Presidents' Meeting held September 21, 2003, in Victoria included:

- a) Harry Wright reported on the propagation scheme being developed at Milner Gardens which would provide for hard-to-obtain species being made available firstly to ARS members and secondly to the public. Funding for this project has been requested.
- b) Mike Bale volunteered to coordinate the "Species Study Days 2004" should there be sufficient interest, and requested the Chapter Presidents to promote this event within their own chapters.
- c) A nominations meeting resulted in Harry Wright being elected as District Director, with Gerry Gibbons as alternate, by acclamation.
- d) Ron Knight advised that the Vancouver chapter was willing to open their garden visits to other Chapters. Mike Bale volunteered to coordinate this with other Chapters in the Fraser Valley.

#### RHODODENDRON SPECIES FOUNDATION PLANT DISTRIBUTION

Beginning with the spring distribution in 2004, all plants ordered by RSF members living in BC will be delivered together to the Botanical Garden at UBC on a date to be announced. A single Phytosanitary Certificate will be shared, and Customs will have been cleared. A flat \$10.00 US charge will be added to each order to contribute to the cost of this delivery. Members will then have one week in which to pick up their plants at UBC. This new system will be considerably more convenient and less expensive than driving down to Federal Way and dealing with the international border on an individual basis. It is hoped that this new "user-friendly" system will encourage more of us north of the border to become members of the RSF. This new arrangement will be particularly helpful for those District One members who were previously reluctant to place an order too small to justify the high cost and inconvenience of such a trip. Any questions about the RSF or the new plant distribution system can be addressed to Joe Ronsley at 604-921-9444 or [jronsley@telus.net](mailto:jronsley@telus.net). The RSF website at [www.rhodygarden.org](http://www.rhodygarden.org) is also being updated to include this information.

#### CALL TO ARMS

This year will see the retirement of several members of the executive, including the president, the secretary, and the treasurer, all of whom have spent many years on the committee in one capacity or another. We are all looking forward to a new, dynamic executive for 2004 who will bring fresh ideas and enthusiasm to the Chapter. The nominating committee under the chairmanship of Trevor Badminton will be canvassing for individuals to fill these positions, and his work would be made much easier if there are individuals with interests and skills who would voluntarily come forward to offer their participation. The effort involved is not onerous and requires just a few hours a month managing the Chapter's affairs. Participation on the executive brings with it a much closer relationship with other members and likely results in life time friendships. Please volunteer.

#### RAFFLE TABLE

Last month we had a tremendous raffle table and lots of contributions to the Twoonie Table. Your support enables the Chapter to keep its fees as low as possible which, in itself, furthers our efforts at recruitment.

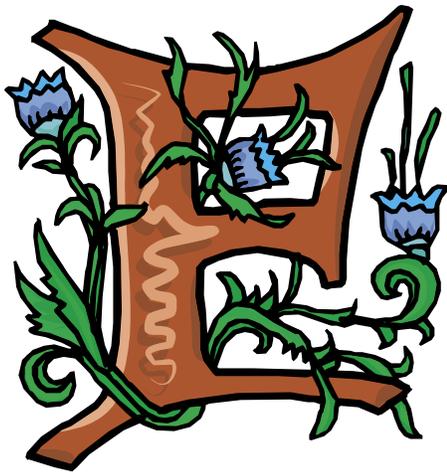
#### MEMBERSHIP

The Executive has again approved a motion to defray the cost of membership by a small subsidy so that a full local and ARS membership will remain at \$35.00. This fee is almost \$20.00 less than the fees for the Vancouver and Victoria Chapters.

#### GRATEFUL THANKS

A huge thank you is once again due to our growers who support the Chapter in so many different ways. We are particularly indebted last month to Les and Bev Clay for bringing some magnificent specimens for the plant sale and their contributions to the raffle table. Many thanks also to Gael, Wendy and Bev who brought items for the refreshment table, and to Mary-Anne and all the other ladies who so willingly assisted with the clean up.

*Mike Bale*



# COMPANION PLANTS

F is for FUCHSIA

the Evening Primrose Family

Family: Onagraceae

I find it rather sad to realize that many people only think of the fuchsia as a bedding plant for summer hanging baskets. They are certainly deprived of the wonder of their late summer show as a permanent plants in borders and beds. We can thank the hardy *F. magellanica* from Chile and

Argentina for these beauties. A fabulous number of hybrids and selections have been produced - from the towering cascades of blooms on the species, to the tidy little mounds of the dwarfs.

Hardiness varies among them, so some trial and error for your particular garden may be necessary. Blooms come in all colors and combinations, in single and double forms, but they are all smaller and daintier than their blowsy hanging-basket cousins and produced in much greater profusion. There is also a great variety of foliage – gold with red stems, dark bronzy green, pink and white variegated, gold-edged, and more.

Not all upright forms should be considered hardy, but if in doubt or if you'd like to push the envelope a bit, mulch them well in winter but make sure they have moisture and drainage. The smaller forms can be mass planted, used as edging to large shrub beds, or in planters, as most grow only 6 - 18 inches tall. Larger forms, some reaching spectacular heights of 8 to 10 feet, can better serve in mixed borders or as informal hedging. Compact forms can easily be trained to standards, pyramids, or espaliers. In a hard winter, even the hardiest selections may die to the ground, but don't despair; if protected, the roots will cheerfully send forth new stems in spring. In fact, most will need periodic removal of the oldest stems as a regular maintenance if Mother Nature doesn't help out.

Fuchsias prefer moist moderately rich soil in morning sun. They need to be sheltered from cold winds, but require good air circulation to avoid leaf diseases. Try not to wet the foliage too much, and treat insects like whitefly and aphid quickly if they appear. Cuttings root very readily, even in a glass of water on a windowsill, so if you're worried about hardiness, start up a few for insurance, or just for sharing. New varieties are constantly available, but many old standards are still readily found. Selections have been grown since about 1768, and even very popular ones like *F. mag.* 'Riccantonii' and 'Lottie Hobby' have been around since the 1830's! For tall shrubs, try *F. mag.* 'Gracilis' and 'Versicolor'; for medium size, try 'Genii', 'Prosperity', 'Display', 'Mrs. Popple', 'Chillerton Beauty', 'Alice Hofman' or 'Mrs. Lovell Swisher'. A new series of dwarf bedding types from Europe is sweeping the better plant centers now, all with lovely girl's names, and WOW do they ever bloom! Older ones like 'Tom Thumb', 'Lady Thumb', 'Peter Pan' and 'Snowcap' are very reliable choices too.

If your interest has been piqued even just a little, go to the show and sales by the Fuchsia Society, and talk to the members. They are a wealth of information on the subject, and can suggest good books if you need more. (I used to go to Chestnut Greenhouses in Surrey many years ago, but am not sure what they grow now).

Happy Planting

Colleen Forster



Fuchsia 'Riccantonii'



Fuchsia 'Mrs. Lovell Swisher'



Fuchsia 'Mrs. Popple'



Fuchsia 'Genii'



From the Editor

## Last Month:

Norman Todd's presentation last meeting on rhododendrons he has known and loved, and some which he has known and loved and lost, reassured us all that even experts with long experience at this rhododendron business can suffer the occasional unwanted, unwarranted, and completely mysterious loss. And as usual, his unique and humorous perspective made us all enjoy the information he imparted even more.

Norman's slides of rhodos with their green lushness were followed by Lori and Dalen Bayes slides of their recent hiking vacation through some of the most arid and spectacularly coloured landscape available. The contrast was both startling and informative, and we were lucky to have two such amusing and knowledgeable speakers in a single evening.

## This Month:

Milner Garden is a 70 acre garden under the stewardship of Malaspina College, located close to Qualicum on the east coast of Vancouver Island. Jim Cadwaladr has previously spoken to the FSRS on the overall state of the garden and its future, but this month we have Margaret Cadwaladr to speak to us on the history and development of the garden until it was donated to Malaspina College. "In Veronica's Garden" is the name of the book written by Margaret on both Veronica Milner, an accomplished artist and plantswoman of some renown whose vision was central to the development of the garden, and the garden itself.

## Next Month:

Susan Murray will talk to us about the heritage trees on the south side of the Fraser River. Susan has learned about some of our early horticulturists in her research on the history of these trees. Her excellent slides show the great diversity of plant material that exists in our area.



Embedded Pebble Pathway with Blossom Pattern  
Classical Chinese Garden - Portland Oregon  
(photo: Chris Klapwijk)



# Another Rhodie Road Trip

Washington and Oregon, May 17, 18 and 19, 2003

It was 5:15 a.m. at Chelsea House in Abbotsford, and the cars were lined up waiting for a turn to park. While many of us were still sleepy, everyone was in good humor about the coming trip. Our driver, Joe, arrived with the bus and we all helped load. As usual, Mike, Patti and Mary Anne's organizational skills were obvious. There were lots of large coolers, each labeled for Saturday, Sunday and Monday, and, Oh Joy! there were even a couple of large thermoses filled with hot coffee.

After picking up more passengers at the United Church, Vandusen and White Rock, our first order of business was to cross the US border. That meant we each had to individually present our identification and put all our personal belongings through an x-ray machine. However, things went smoothly and we were soon off for a pit stop and our first "feeding" of the trip: coffee, fruit and muffins. Washington State certainly maintains attractive and clean rest areas. By 9:30, we were heading down I-5 towards Kubota Garden, just south of Seattle.



Stone Bridge - Kubota Garden  
Seattle, Washington  
(photo: Norma Senn)

Kubota Garden, first established in 1927 by Fujitaro Kubota, was acquired by the City of Seattle Parks Department in 1987. It has magnificent conifers with lots of large *Cedrus*, pines, Douglas firs, and spruces, and the collection includes many good weeping forms. As well, we saw a very fine specimen of Camperdown Elm (*Ulmus* 'Camperdownii'). At the time of our visit, pink horse chestnuts (*Aesculus carnea*) were in full bloom, as were a row of *Paulownia* trees (Empress Tree), just along the street leading into the garden entrance.

Kubota Garden is highly regarded for its water and rock features. The waterfalls were beautifully done, seeming to fall naturally from the highest points in the garden. According to the garden's literature, rock and water work were the hallmark of Mr. Kubota's landscape company. The "necklace of ponds" gave us lovely morning reflections. The ponds are inter-connected by small streams, with many stepping stone bridges along the various paths, and there were lots of baby ducks here to entertain us as we enjoyed the garden. Kubota Garden has nice changes in topographic level and there are many lush layers of foliage reaching from the ground up into the canopy. From the garden's various high points, the lovely new spring conifer foliage with undergrowth of deciduous trees was easily appreciated. Kubota Garden has good wheel chair

access, especially in the strolling garden created in 2000. See more details about the garden and its history at [www.Kubota.org/history.htm](http://www.Kubota.org/history.htm). We finished our visit with the first of the weekend's great lunches. I just love it when someone else cooks!

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From Kubota Garden, we headed south to Oregon. Rain, hail, sun, it was a case of, “if you don’t like the weather, just wait a few minutes for it to change”. Our next stop was the Cecil and Molly Smith Garden, in Newberg, a farming community just southwest of Portland, where our hosts were waiting for us with wine, cheese, two delicious and wonderfully hot soups, as well as salads, cookies and mint truffles. We were honored to have many members of the local Oregon Chapters host us for the evening.

The Cecil and Molly Smith Garden is located in the country on a wooded knoll, surrounded by cultivated fields. The garden slopes away from the house, down the hillside towards the adjoining countryside. The back porch of the house provided a good vantage point for getting an overview of garden. Second growth Douglas firs stretch up and create a protective ring around the garden. The limbed trunks are straight and



the firs easily reach over 100 feet in height. There were many beautiful, mature species and hybrid rhododendrons in bloom to enjoy. Of course, Cecil Smith was well-known as a hybridizer, and some of his lovely crosses were at their peak of bloom. Two that particularly caught my eye were ‘Jalisco Elect x ‘Yellow Creek’ and ‘Bambi’ x *pachysanthum*. Some nice Loderis were in full bloom, with ‘Pink Diamond’ being a especially nice this evening. The fragrance from the Loderis was a great bonus.

R. ‘Jalisco Elect’ x R. ‘Yellow Creek’  
Cecil and Molly Smith Garden - Newberg, Oregon  
(photo: Norma Senn)

In addition to Rhododendrons, the Smith Garden has a good collection of wild flowers which are used as ground covers. Both *Smilacina* (False Solomon’s Seal) and *Polygonatum* (Solomon’s Seal) were in full bloom, as was *Cornus canadensis*. There were well established patches of *Asarum*, the wild ginger, and lots of maidenhair ferns were just unfurling their new fronds. Forget-me-knots have seeded themselves to create carpets of bright blue under many of the rhododendrons. I’d never thought about using *Zantedeschia* as a companion plant for rhododendrons, but there were several good clumps growing happily throughout the garden. It was a treat to see them in bloom. We all had a chance to look over the sale plants, and many of us picked up a variety of well-grown plants at very reasonable prices. See the ARS Journal, winter, 1995, page 38, for more details about the Smith Garden.

Sunday morning started out foggy, and there was frost on the roof line when I first looked out the motel window. Apparently it had snowed so heavily in the mountains overnight that the US National Parks wouldn’t be opening for the American Memorial Day holiday the following week. After breakfast, we were off to Van Veen’s Nursery.

This famous nursery is now completely surrounded by a well-established residential neighborhood, but we knew we were in the right place because we could see so many rhodies in bloom as we drove up the street. There were lots of opportunities for the shutterbugsto take pictures this morning, the light was good and many of the plants were still dewy. I was relieved that there didn’t seem to be any frost damage to the flowers at the nursery. Among other things, I appreciated the clear, easy to read labels. A new hybrid, at least to me, that was at its peak during our visit was ‘The Master’.



R. ‘The Master’  
Van Veen Nursery - Portland, Oregon  
(photo: Norma Senn)

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Our group happily wandered about houses and the lath house. Again, there plants. I managed to buy their last one that I've admired in several of our helpful, friendly and very kind, and eaten breakfast, we were supplied with were off to Crystal Springs Garden.



to look at stock plants, the propagation was the chance to pick up some lovely available plant of 'Midnight Mystique', beer bottle truss shows. The staff was since it had been a whole hour since we'd coffee and cookies. After our thanks, we

Rhododendron 'Midnight Mystique'  
(R. 'Midnight' x R. '1000 Butterflies' by Fujioka)

We were privileged to have Ted Van Veen join us at Crystal Springs where he gave the group a brief history of the garden, and then led a tour. This is a lovely public garden. There were small groves of mature 'Loderi King George' and 'Venus', approximately 75 years old, in full bloom this morning. They were planted in such a way that the terrific bark and fragrance could be fully appreciated. Several mature specimens of 'Blue Peter' were at their peak too. Crystal Springs has lovely vistas throughout the garden and across the pond to the neighboring golf course. There were lots of rhododendrons here for the rhodoholics, but there were many other plants to enjoy, including some fine *Davidias*, which were in full bloom. It was nice to see a city park being enjoyed by people of all ages. The ducks, geese, and squirrels were entertaining small children, and there were lots of places to just sit and enjoy the beautiful spring morning.



A Group of Loderi  
Crystal Springs Garden - Portland, Oregon  
(photo: Chris Klapwijk)

We ate lunch in the parking lot of Reed College, just across from Crystal Springs. In keeping with the gardens we were to visit in the afternoon, lunch had an Asian flavor with samosas, Indian-style potato cakes, and delicious salads to eat. Then, we drove to the Portland Chinese Garden in the downtown core. Right in the main entrance to welcome visitors was a beautiful potted *Agapetes* in full bloom.

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The design of this garden is based on the “Humble Scholar’s Garden” located in Portland’s sister city, Suzhou, China. There are lovely views from one garden room to another and the garden is enclosed and intertwined with traditional Chinese buildings. Most of the buildings had turned up roof lines to protect us all from demons. As well, the garden pathways were laid out with many turns of direction so that demons could not follow the visitors. These techniques obviously work, because I didn’t see a single demon anywhere in the entire garden.

Several examples of “pen jing” were located throughout the garden; most of these were on loan from the Weyerhaeuser Collection. In the fragrance garden, a couple of *Pittosporum* species were in full bloom, and they scented the whole area. There was an interesting containerized *Poncirus trifoliata* too. The garden has many nice rhododendrons, but there were lots of other interesting species to admire, for example: *Chimonanthus*, dwarf pomegranate, Wisteria, Lotus and *Prunus mume*. One of the buildings features a series of carved panels made of Ginkgo wood. The wood is a deep golden yellow and shows off the detailed carvings to perfection. The docents who provided us first with a horticultural tour and then a cultural tour, were excellent and their explanations about the building and garden features added to our enjoyment and understanding.



Pen Jing  
Classical Chinese Garden - Portland, Oregon  
(photo: Chris Klapwijk)

From China, we headed off to Japan, metaphorically speaking, as our next stop was the Japanese Garden located in Washington Park, also a City of Portland public park and the former site of the Portland Zoo. We were lucky to have another very knowledgeable guide with an obvious passion for the garden. The Japanese azaleas were in bloom and we were told it was an exceptionally good year for them. The ponds and rocks form vignettes full of symbolism: mountains, Buddha, cranes and turtles - well, you just had to be there. The moss carpet that can be found throughout most of the garden was soft and inviting, and as usual when visiting Japanese gardens, I found myself wondering why we do so much to get rid of moss from our lawns when it makes such an attractive ground cover for shady areas.

Our last stop of the day was Bovee’s Nursery. I’ve wanted to go there for years since they pioneered the art of growing vireyas in the Pacific Northwest. The colors and fragrance of these rhododendron jewels is wonderful. We got to wander around the display garden and greenhouses. Lucy Sorenson-Smith, E. White Smith, and George Watson were inundated by us, but with grace and good humor they answered our questions, helped everyone make good selections of plants and wrote up sales receipts. All the while, they were trying to see that we got our dinner and to catch a bite to eat themselves. In addition to the Vireyas, the garden around the house has many lovely plants in it. A couple of huge *R. campylogynums*, in particular, caught my eye. They also have a good collection of unusual ground covers, with some very nice species of *Vancouveria*. We had another delicious meal: wine, cold cuts, cheese, fruits and veggies, and lingered in the garden to enjoy the fine spring evening.



‘Blackii’



‘Just Peachy’



‘Carillon Bells’



‘Silver Thimbles’



‘Hot Tropic’

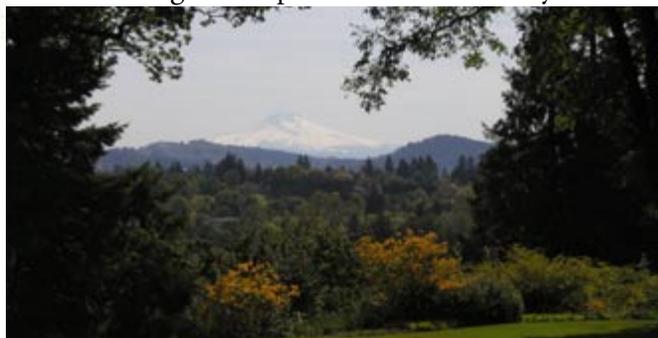
A few of the vireyas available at Bovee’s Nursery



Wisteria - Elk Rock Garden of the Bishop's Close  
Portland, Oregon (photo: David Sessions)

mature trees here, with lots of *Magnolias*, a very nice mature *Parrotia*, and many fine conifers, including *Taiwania*, the Coffin Tree. I knew from a previous visit that there is a *Parrotiopsis* here. I was hoping it would be in bloom, but late frost had damaged all its flowers. Many of us ended our visit by sitting on the garden terrace and enjoying the view to Mt. Hood in the warm spring sunshine.

On Monday morning, after eating another protein laden breakfast, we were on the road by 8 a.m. Our first stop was at Elk Rock Garden of the Bishop's Close. This garden was donated to the Anglican Archdiocese in 1957. What a gorgeous setting along the banks of the Willamette River with sweeps of green lawns, mature trees and small secret gardens everywhere. There is a fabulous *Wisteria floribunda* trained over a garden seat that was in full bloom for our visit, and I think everyone took a turn sitting under this glorious plant. There are many



View of Mt. Hood - Elk Rock Garden of the Bishop's Close  
Portland, Oregon (photo: Chris Klapwijk)

From Elk Rock Garden, we headed north towards home. We stopped at a Washington State rest area for another picnic lunch and then made our last garden stop, Lakewold Gardens in Lakewold Washington, just north of Seattle. Like Bishop's Close, this garden started as a former grand estate, and both the house and garden are still lovely. There were lots of rhododendrons in bloom, including a fine grouping of 'Loderi King George' with mature, container-grown 'Bow Bells' situated in front of them. 'Mrs Betty Robertson', 'Hotei' and 'Gypsy King' were all at peak bloom too. This garden has great mature trees: *Metasequoia*, large Douglas firs (one of which has an impressive lightning strike) some fine *Parrotias* and Japanese maples. Lakewold also has an attractive belvedere located at the end of a long garden vista, and some nice statuary can be found throughout the garden. While most of Lakewold Gardens is well-established, it was nice to see that new plantings are being added. There is a relatively new herb bed near the house. I saw a young 'Nancy Evans' in full bloom, and a specimen of *Ribes speciosum* was just planted this spring.

We had one last stop to eat, and can you believe it, it was an all-you-can-eat buffet! "Papa Mike" paid for us all, and after dinner, we were on the bus heading for home. We breezed through the border crossing, which surprised us all since it was Monday evening of the long weekend.

For those of us on the trip, we came home with happy memories of wonderful gardens, good companions and great food. On behalf of everyone on the trip, I would like to thank Mike and Patti Bale, and Mary Anne Berg, as well as all of the people from Washington and Oregon who made the trip so memorable. If you haven't been on one of the "Rhodie Road" trips, you've missed a weekend of pure enjoyment.

Norma Senn