

The Oak

Newsletter of
the Fraser South
Rhododendron
Society

Volume 20 Number 6
June 2007



www.flounder.ca/FraserSouth

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

This Month's Meeting:

**THE FRASER SOUTH
RHODODENDRON SOCIETY'S
RENOWNED
ANNUAL PICNIC
SATURDAY, JUNE 16TH**

**OFFICIAL COMMENCEMENT AT 3:00 PM
BUT COME AND HELP US SET UP
ANYTIME AFTER 1:30 PM**

2007 Officers

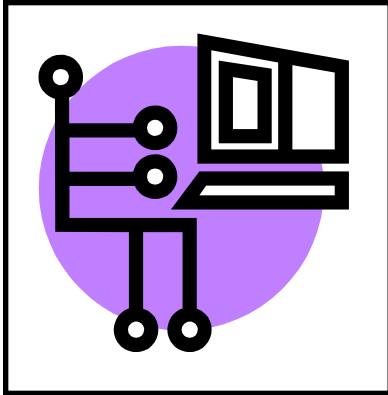
President:	Dalen Bayes	360-966-4596
Vice Pres.:	Harold Fearing	604-857-4136
Secretary:	Mary-Anne Berg	604-853-5737
Treasurer:	Alan March	604-532-9062
Directors:	Colleen Forster	604-534-1840
	3 rd yr	
	Sean Rafferty	604-990-5353
	2 nd yr	
	Larry Morton	604-888-6564
	1 st yr	
Programme:	Les Clay	604-530-5188
Membership:	Wenonah March	604-532-9062
Newsletter:	Brenda Macdonald	604-990-5353
Website:	Chris Klapwijk	604-581-0925

Quick Hits



Picnic!

This year's annual picnic will be held at the home of John and Gael Dodd. See the attached map for directions.



From the Editor

Last Month

Last month was our Annual Truss Show. Although this was a “late show” year (that is, scheduled for the May meeting rather than an “early show” timing of the April meeting) the weather was erratic enough that it turned out to be a sort of late-early, somewhat mid-point, early-late show. In fact it never ceases to amaze me that each year the display of trusses is so different from those displayed the year before.

And as usual the display was marvellous,. There was everything from huge ‘Red Wallopers’ to a tiny white ‘Silver Thimble’, not to mention the marvelous non-competitive arrays brought by Vern Finley. Voting was completed in its usual exceedingly democratic fashion, with all beads tabulated and certified by our own in-house Price Waterhouse clone, Wenonah March, and individual class winners able to immediately gratify their triumphs by choosing something from the prize table.



This Month:

Our annual Picnic and Auction. You probably remember the drill, but just in case the effort of beating down the weevils from the rhodos and the slugs from the cardiocrinums has emptied your brain, here they all are again.

The picnic is scheduled for 3:00 pm, but assistance with set up and take down is always appreciated - anytime after 1:30pm.

Don't forget to bring:

- a chair to sit upon
- a plate to eat off
- cutlery to eat with
- the adult beverage of your choice, if desired
- a mug for the adult beverage of your choice, or the tea and coffee which will be provided

- your potluck contribution, for sharing with others
- utensils to serve your potluck contribution, if necessary
- any friends, neighbours, or visiting relatives whom you think would enjoy meeting us and learning more about the FSRS
- as well as your quality auction items for Auctioneers Bayes and Klapwijk. Look around you, there is sure to be something worthwhile to contribute to the auction: superfluous gardening tools or equipment? mysterious seedling tree peonies? horticultural texts on a subject which no longer interests you? the occasional rhodo taking over most of your backyard? Bring something someone else will be interested in, and then bid early and bid high for something you are interested in.

Next Month:

won't be next month, it will be in September - Wednesday, September 19th to be exact, so stay safe, be happy, have a good summer, and be sure to attend the September meeting armed with tall tales of large fish caught and magnificent gardens cultivated.

The Business Stuff:

ANNUAL PLANT SALE

Although the figures are not completely tabulated, Alan March reports that funds raised from our Annual Plant Sale, held Saturday, April 14th total approximately \$773.00. Our thanks to all who helped out, especially Karen Linton for organizing the coffee and lunch for the worker bees; Vern Finley, and Sue and Chris Klapwijk, for providing such a magnificent truss display; and the growers, Les Clay, Colleen Forster, and Sue Klapwijk, without whom none of this would have been possible.

THE VOLUNTEER BRIGADE

It is axiomatic that those who volunteer are never properly acknowledged, so we should all step back and raise a cheer for the rota of kitchen elves who take care of providing us with tea and coffee and the washing up afterwards, and all those who so generously create and donate the various baked goods and other snack items we so enthusiastically enjoy at each meeting. You know who you all are, so stop blushing and take a bow. We need you, and we thank you.

Also, although we miss Phyllis Anderson badly and hope she will be able to return to our meetings soon, we are very grateful to Arlene Darby for taking over the official Greeter and Handler of the Name tags responsibilities.

Brenda Macdonald





And the Winners are ...

The world famous Fraser South Beer Bottle Truss Show was held at our May meeting, Wednesday, May 16th.

Here are the winners:

CLASSES Division I

Species Classes

- Class 1. Rhododendron (lepidotes)
Dalen/Lori Bayes - R. sargentianum
- Class 2. Azalea (deciduous and evergreen)
tie
Dave Sellars - R. occidentale
Alan Kilvert - R. kiusianum
- Class 3. Hymenantha (elepidotes)
tie
Garth Wedemire - R. yakushmanum
Garth Wedemire - R. argyrophyllum
'Chinese Silver'

Division II

Hybrid Classes

- Class 4. Any lepidote hybrid
no entry
- Class 5. Any deciduous azalea hybrid
Terry/Joan McGiveron - R. 'Gilbralter'
- Class 6. Any evergreen azalea hybrid
Wenonah March - R. 'Refrain'

Colour Classes

- Class 7a: Red - (small)
Dave Sellars - R. 'Lem's Stormcloud'
- 7b: Red - (large)
Dalen/Lori Bayes - R. 'Red Walloper'
- Class 8a: White - (small)
Chris Klapwijk - R. 'Silver Thimbles'
- 8b: White - (large)
Les Clay - R. 'Loderi Princess Marina'
- Class 9a: Pink - (small)
Vern Finley - R. 'Brittania' x
yakushmanum
- 9b: Pink - (large)
Alan Klivert - R. 'Snow Queen' x
R. 'Albatross'

9c: Pink - (really, really, large)

Dave Sellars - R. 'Point Defiance'

Class 10a: Yellow & Cream (small)

Sean Rafferty - R. 'Yeti'

10b: Yellow & Cream (large)

Sean Rafferty - R. 'Crest'

Class 11: Mauves & Purple

Dalen/Lori Bayes - R. 'Chapeau'

Class 12: Orange

Dalen/Lori Bayes - R. 'Kubla Khan'

Class 13: Bi-colour

Wenonah March - R. 'Lem's Cameo'

Division III

Special Classes

- Class 14: "What's it Called" - best new non-registered hybrid -
Chris Klapwijk - R. 'Kilimanjaro' x
R. yakushmanum
- Class 15: Truss with the Best Fuzzy Foliage
Dalen/Lori Bayes - R. 'Neato'
- Class 16: Best Blotched
Chris Klapwijk - R. 'Mrs. O. B. Watkins'
- Class 17: Best Speckled
Dalen/Lori Bayes - R. 'Paprika Spiced'
- Class 18: Most Lurid
Vern Finley - R. FWC #3 x R. LC8369
- Class 19: Best Last Year's Truss
Dalen/Lori Bayes - R. discolor
- Class 20: Most Elegantly Weevil-Notched
tie
Dalen/Lori Bayes - R. roxianum hybrid
Larry Morton - R. 'Purple Splendour'
- Class 21: Best Hammerhead
Vern Finley - R. 'John Coutts' x R. 'Naomi'
- Class 22: Most Flaccid
tie
Dalen/Lori Bayes - R. haematodes
Colleen Forster - R. 'Thor'
- Class 23: Best Miniature Truss - under 6"
Brenda Macdonald - R. charitopes
- Class 24: Most Fragrant (Az. or Rh.)
Vern Finley - R. 'Snow Queen'
- Class 25: Lionheart Award for best over-all Yellow
Mike Bale - R. 'Champagne'

Aggregate Points Winner: Dalen/Lori Bayes'



Earlier this year, I was lucky enough to spend my vacation in New Zealand, a country well-known for its fine public display gardens. I visited many gardens that were exceptional, including the finest rose garden I've ever seen in the Wellington Botanic Garden. However, what impressed me most was the wonderful herbaceous border I saw in the Christchurch Botanic Garden.

This is a double, formal-style border, where two parallel herbaceous borders are separated by a central, grassy walkway. The straight beds are a couple of hundred feet in length, and each bed is at least 20 feet wide. Of course, it's easy to have a spectacular display with such a large garden, but when I saw them, what made these borders so wonderful was the colour selection of the plant materials. The majority of flowers were selected from the "hot" side of the colour wheel, so most of the colours were yellows, reds, oranges and shades in between with occasional hits of blue and white to provide accent colours. The flower colours and plant types were repeated regularly to give coherence and rhythm to a formally designed bed layout. In some cases, plants were selected as much for their foliage features as they were for their flowers. For example, red, orange and yellow-flowered Canna lilies were grown in large clumps, but the varieties of Cannas selected had deep red or bright yellow, variegated foliage.

Things that made this garden so effective included: use of easy-to-grow plants with a harmonious colour theme, repetition of plants, growing large clumps of plants

in drifts and attention to placement



Christchurch Botanic Garden

Up the Garden Path with "Hot" Borders

based on ultimate plant height so that plants along the pathways were the shortest and plant height gradually increased towards the back. As well, plants located along the borders' edges had attractive foliage that looked good throughout the growing season. Plants known to have foliage that becomes straggly in the late summer were placed more towards the back of the beds so that other plants hid the foliage no longer in its prime. For example, while Oriental Poppies are glorious in the early summer, once the foliage is past they look tatty so it's a good idea to have other plants nearby that will fill in around the poppies, to make the garden look better in the late summer.

The Christchurch area is milder than even our south coastal area, but most of the plants they used are hardy and readily available here. For those plants that aren't reliably hardy, for example the Agapanthus, hardy substitutes can be used. Naturally, we can't make such extensive beds in our small home gardens, but we can use some of the botanic garden's landscaping ideas to create smaller herbaceous borders, or to up-date existing garden beds.

For maximum impact and widest selection of plant materials, herbaceous borders are placed in sunny areas. Shady borders are certainly possible, but the plant selection will be different. The bed area needs to be wide enough to allow staggered planting depth to avoid lining up plants, one after another, like soldiers on parade. However, the bed should also be kept narrow enough to be able to work around the plants easily. Perennial beds may range in width from about 5 to 15 feet. The Christchurch beds were wider, but gardeners could get in between clumps of plants by moving carefully. Ideally,

the bed should be long enough to allow some planting repetition where one kind of plant can be planted several times. If at all possible, a bed at least 20 feet long is reasonable for home gardens.

The bed outline can be a formal



Montbretia



White Phlox



Achillea

rectangle or softened by creating gentle curving edges, just remember to create edges that are easy to mow and maintain if you're growing grass adjacent to the perennial bed. Bed preparation takes work, and as is so often the case in gardening, good preparation pays off in the end. After determining the bed placement and outline, start by

stripping off all existing sod or ground cover. Then thoroughly dig the soil to a depth of at least 10 inches (deeper is better), and if you need to, as indicated by a soil test, add soil amendments like compost, lime or superphosphate. Work all the soil amendments into

the top soil. Then, planting can start, although it's advisable to plan out the planting design on paper first.

It used to be that herbaceous perennials were planted either in the early spring or in the fall. However, with the wealth of container grown plant material that's available all summer, you can plant throughout the growing season as long as water

is available for irrigation in the establishment year. To be on the safe side though, spring planting is recommended because it allows new plants to become well-established in their first summer of growth. The other advantage to spring planting is that you can do the heavy bed preparation in the fall, applying compost then which will break down in time for the spring planting season.

Selection of plants is a personal choice depending on the look you want to achieve. Garden books on herbaceous perennials include planting charts that give suggestions on specific plant selection and spacing. They also include planting information that will help you select plants that will create a succession of bloom over the summer.

The Christchurch Botanical garden has a website where



Christchurch Botanic Garden

they provide information about their border, including a list of plant material they use. To create something like the "hot" border though, select plants to fit the look. Examples are: salmon shades of Achillea (Summer Pastels), red Lychnis (Maltese Cross), red, yellow and orange Montbretia, orange dahlias, red and orange shades of daylilies, red, yellow and orange Cannas, red and yellow forms of Kniphofia, red Lobelia, yellow Rudbeckia and red forms of Geum. Plan on repeating large clumps of the plants you select. Then, to set off these hot colours, you might want to add a colour contrast like white perennial phlox or blue flowers like ornamental flax or monkshood, suitable alternatives to Agapanthus. If the hot colours aren't to your taste, you could create a planting palate of pastels, or a white and cream garden, or whatever tickles your fancy.

No matter what colour choice you make though, select plants that are suited to your growing site. As well, try to select plants that have a long season of bloom, and choose plants that will provide interest in the spring, summer and fall. If necessary, especially with a newly planted border, you might want to add some annual bedding plants to give the garden a fuller look in its first summer. Perennials borders do take a few years to really get going.

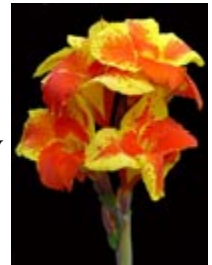
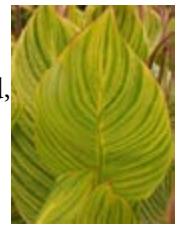
Perennial borders do require weeding, especially to keep grassy weeds in check. Adding a mulch will help keep weed populations under control, but there's no substitute for hand weeding on a regular basis. As well, a 2 to 3 inch layer of mulch will help conserve moisture and lessen the need for irrigation, but depending on the summer weather and your site, you may need to water regularly.



Monkshood



Kniphofia



Canna leaf and flower

Norma Senn



Rhododendrons of China



R. trichocladum
Illustration by Lilian Snelling
- Curtis' Botanical Magazine

Rhododendron trichocladum

Not one of the most spectacular of the species rhododendrons, *R. trichocladum* still has certain somewhat subtle attributes that make it attractive to a collector - that is apart from its relative rarity in garden settings, always a powerful incentive to a rhododendron "twitcher".

This deciduous or semi-deciduous bush has both precocious flowers (i.e. flowers that come out before the new leaves expand) and a very long bloom time, often from April to July with another small flush of blossoms in the fall as the leaves turn yellow. This means that this somewhat lax and rounded shrub with bristly branchlets is almost never without a blossom or two during its entire growing season. The edges of the leaves are fringed with hairs and the new growth often an attractive bronzy colour.

Although the blossoms are small and located in terminal inflorescences of only 2 to 5 flowers, the more attractive colour forms are a rich sulphur yellow, sometimes with green spotting in the throat, and funnel-campanulate in shape. It is interesting to note that the type species has only terminal inflorescences, and that the many forms discovered with both terminal and axillary blossoms are almost certainly natural hybrids between *R. trichocladum* and *R. racemosum*. The stigma of the flower is characteristically stout and sharply bent, almost at a right-angle.

R. trichocladum has been collected many times, starting with Delavay in 1885 on the slopes of the Cangshan mountains in Yunnan. It is hardy and fairly vigorous - although not large, usually attaining only about 5 feet in height and width - so one must assume it is only its lack of dramatic flair that prevents it from being more widely grown.

Another member of Subsection Tricoclada, *R. lepidostylum*, is a more frequent garden choice due to its flat-topped mounding habit and wonderfully blue-green glaucous new foliage, even though in this case the very similar flowers are often almost completely hidden by the emerging leaves.

Trichocladum does not seem to have been particularly attractive to hybridists either, even though the only cross noted in Salley & Greer, *R. 'Chink'* (*R. keiskei* x *R. trichocladum*) looks quite attractive.



R. trichocladum
photo by Warren Berg

Brenda Macdonald



R. 'Chink'
R. keiskei x R. trichocladum
Crown Estate, 1961



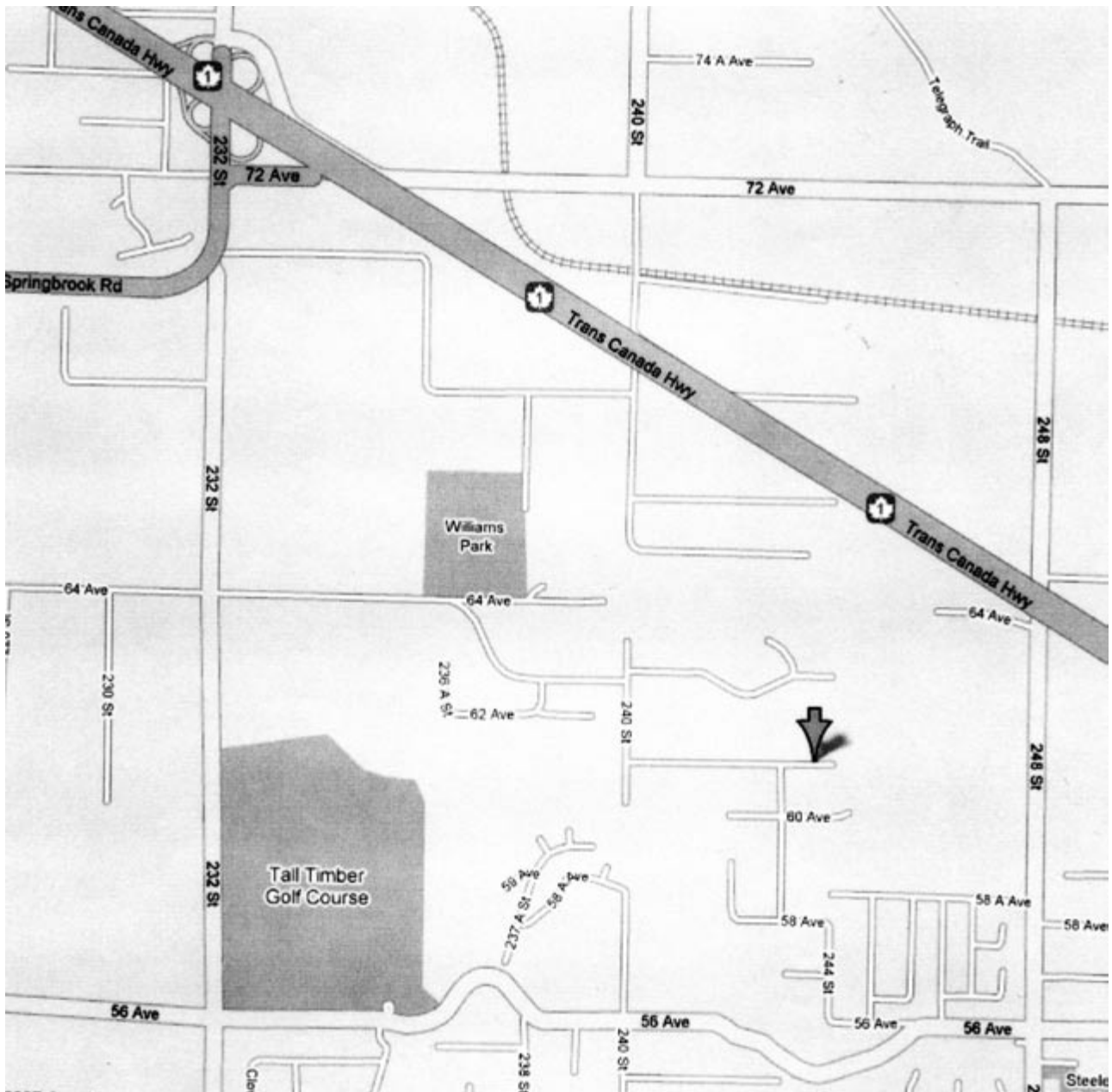
R. trichocladum in situ, in front of the almost vertical walls of the Cangshan mountains, near Dali in Yunnan, China
photo by Brenda Macdonald, 2005

Have you wondered why you feel so much better after a vigorous morning of digging and delving? Mary Berg sends along this excerpt from the Parkhurst Exchange, a Canadian Medical Journal:

Ever wonder why gardening is relaxing and appeals to people, and children find that "wallowing in the mud" feels so good? Well, in addition to the fact that they are both outdoor activities, it seems that bacteria in the soil stimulate the immune system and activate serotonergic neurons in the brain. Serotonin in the brain acts as an antidepressant.

Researchers in Bristol and London, England, injected mice with heat-killed *Mycobacterium vaccae* [a soil-borne bacterium] after cancer patients treated with these bacteria reported fewer symptoms and increased quality of life.

M. vaccae in this case acts as a vaccine to fight depression. It was already being considered for Crohn's disease and rheumatoid arthritis as well. "The results leave us wondering if we shouldn't all spend more time playing in the dirt," says lead investigator Chris Lowry.



FSRS Annual Picnic and Auction:

John and Gael Dodd
24365 - 61 Ave, Langley
604-530-0153

Saturday, June 16 3:00 pm (come earlier to help set up at 1:30 pm)

from the 232 Street exit, go south of freeway to 56 Ave and turn east, or
from the 264 Street exit, immediately turn west onto 56 Ave

where the main 56 Ave and smaller feeder 56 Ave meet at an acute angle (around 245 Street) proceed
west on the small residential road, wiggle your way up to 61 Ave and turn right.