

The Yak

Newsletter of the Fraser South Rhododendron Society

Volume 20 Number 8
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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

Date: Wednesday, October 17, 2007
Speaker: Roger Low
Topic: Bonsai
Plant Sales: Colleen Bojczuk

2007 Officers

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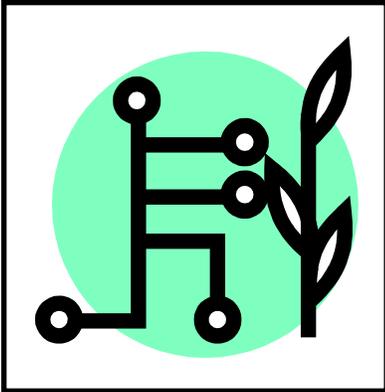
Quick Hits

Membership:

It's that time of year again! - same fee, the same early timetable as last year's.

The ARS has made the date by which all registrations need to be in to them a little earlier. This means that we must receive all the registrations by the end of October in order to batch them up and submit them to the ARS for processing. Please ensure that our

Membership Chair, Wenonah March, has your registration form and fee by October 30th at the latest.



From the President

Notes from the Chair

Autumn has certainly arrived, with cooler temperatures, grey skies and lots of rain. Unfortunately many types of weeds are still coming up and the slugs are still attempting to consume our garden.

I wrote last spring about the winter damage to a number of our big leaf rhododendrons. Here is an update. The thermometer dropped to 7 F. here last winter. Two *R. sinograndes* (one 8 feet tall, and the other with huge leaves) were killed, along with a sizeable *R. montroseanum*. The *R. macabeanums* were frozen to the ground but are re-sprouting well. Several species lost all their leaves but came back well. The sad thing is we grow some of these plants for their foliage and most were carrying 3-4 years of foliage. Several tender, but smaller, big-leaves were covered by snow and came through fine. The hardy plants of this group: *R. hodgsonii*, *R. rex ssp. rex* and *ssp. fictolacteam*, *R. rothschildii* and *R. arizeleum* showed no damage at all.

We knew we would lose some of the more tender big-leaved plants when a cold winter came, and were surprised it hadn't happened sooner. But apparently some people are slow learners - we have replaced the tender plants with more of the same.

A group of plants that do well in our woodland garden are trilliums. They like a rich, loamy soil with humus, lightly shaded, and well drained. Trilliums are native to western and eastern North America and Asia. Asia has a half dozen species, the same is true for western N.A., while about three dozen species occur in eastern N.A. No given species occurs in more than one of these three areas. The actual taxonomy can be quite confusing as the range of many species overlap and they hybridize quite easily in some areas.

Our native *Trillium ovatum* is one of our most striking and beautiful of spring flowers. At times trilliums are referred to as Wake Robins as they both appear about the same time, but both Lori and I (when we were children) knew them as "Easter Lilies". We also knew that if you picked them you would go to prison, just like you would if you cut those tags off of pillows and mattresses. The picking and digging of certain trilliums is actually against the law in some states and provinces. I wish somebody would tell the deer about these laws.

Deer are the most severe pest of trilliums here. Sometimes they eat the leaves and flowers, and if this is done repeatedly the trillium will die. I think the deer must decide, "It's Tuesday, so lets go eat trillium flowers for dessert at Dalen and Lori's." Deer prey (yes, that's the right word) on trilliums primarily in the spring. We have noticed that they eat our native trilliums but seldom eat other species, and if they do try the others, it's only one or two sets of leaves.

Trillium seedlings do not appear above ground until the second spring after dispersal. For the first two or three years after germination they form just a single leaf. This changes from a single narrow leaf to a more typically shaped leaf. The, as the plant gains strength the normal tripartite leaves appear. Flowering usually occurs five to seven years after germination. Trilliums usually have white blossoms, but some have flowers of other colors.



Trillium ovatum



Trillium ovatum
showing pink tones developed after
fertilization

This can be true even within a given species. There are three bracts which subtend the petals. These bracts provide protection for the floral parts of the flower until they are ready to open. Then their only purpose appears to be photosynthesis.

Trilliums are divided into two groups, depending if the flower sits right on top of the leaves - the sessile group, or the flower is carried on a pedicel (flower stem) 1-6 cm tall - the pedicellate group. In most cases the petals in the sessile group are held together in a more or less upright position. These flowers usually last longer than those of the pedicellate group, whose petals splay outward. Many species have leaves which are mottled with different shades of green and are very attractive.



Trillium chloropetalum var. giganteum

Each spring splashes of white *T. ovatum* flowers dot our garden and woodlands. This has to be our favorite trillium. After a couple of weeks the white flowers (held on a 2-6 cm pedicel) gradually turn to a rosy pink or deep red. *T. ovatum* is the most widespread of the western trilliums, growing from mid-California to southwestern B.C. It can attain a maximum height of 50 cm, although, as in many species, there are dwarf forms.



Trillium grandiflorum

We also have a clump of *T. chloropetalum* var. *giganteum*, which is native to the California coast just above San Francisco. The plant is as large as its name suggests. The flowers are sessile with the petals standing erect and touching each other, obscuring the anthers and stigma. Trillium flowers vary from white, greenish-white, or pink to a dark purple-red in color. Our variety of



Trillium luteum

giganteum has flowers of a garnet purple, with petals up to 10 cm in length and bracts of the same color. This is a very striking trillium, with flowers lasting a full two months.

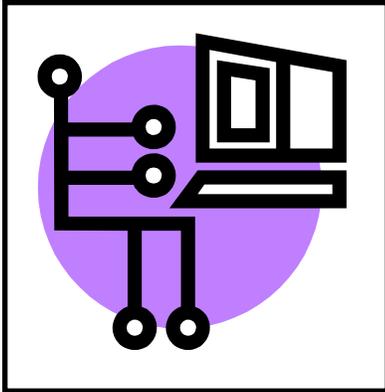
One of the showiest and most loved of all trilliums is *T. grandiflorum*, with its large white flowers borne on top of erect pedicels. Its range is from Minnesota to Maine, and from N. Carolina to Ontario (where it is the provincial flower). There is also an uncommon pink form. In the center of its range it can cover the woodland floor with great drifts of white as thousands of plants can grow in a single acre. It is a much prized plant in Europe.

Another trillium we are quite taken with is *T. luteum*. This is a sessile trillium with dark green leaves mottled with areas of a lighter green, and blossoms of a greenish-yellow. A plant of medium size, it occurs in north-eastern Tennessee and east into North Carolina. I didn't realize when I bought mine that most plants of *T. luteum* are collected in the wild. Oops!

Trilliums, with their showy, long lasting flowers, can be a welcome addition to any garden with their different colored flowers and mottled leaves. Most all are hardy in our Pacific Northwest climate.

I hope to see you all at the next meeting.

Dalen Bayes



From the Editor

Last Month

Last month our speaker was Art Lightburn, Vice-President of the Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society (MARS) located at Qualicum Beach on Vancouver Island. Art and his wife Susan attended the 2006 Pacific Region International Rhododendron Conference held in Burnie, Tasmania, in the fall of 2006.

Both Art and his wife were remarkably patient as we worked through some incredibly frustrating technical problems - ending up with Barbara St. Hilaire generously returning to her house to pick up a computer that would work - before we could listen to Art's description and look at Susan's wonderful photographs of their fascinating trip.

My personal thanks to them both, and in fact to all members of the club (and particularly Barb St. Hilaire) for being so patient and understanding during what was a SNAFU of epic proportions.

The only good thing about the delay is that it gave us a chance to listen to Les Clay report on the progress he has made in implementing a plan for a botanical garden in a 50-acre site close to the Langley airport. This is an immense and worthy undertaking and one for which Les deserves both our congratulations and gratitude.

This Month:

Our speaker will be Roger Low, who will be speaking on and demonstrating some of the bonsai techniques he has been utilizing for quite a number of years. Roger is a member of the American Bonsai Society, the British Columbia Bonsai Federation, a Director of Region 5 (Canada) of the Pacific Northwest Bonsai Clubs Association, and a member of the Alpine Garden Club of B.C. In addition, he is a member of, and has received a Bronze Medal from, the Vancouver Rhododendron Society.

Next Month:

Gerry Gibbens, Head Gardener, Van Dusen Sino-Himalayan garden will speak on "What is a Botanical Garden?"

The Business Stuff:

ANNUAL DUES

It's time to pay the piper again. The ARS moved forward the date on which they need to receive the annual dues from all the Chapters last year, so this year, again, we need to remit the money by the end of October. Please complete the Enrolment Form attached at the back of this issue, or complete one of the copies that will be available at this month's meeting.

RHODODENDRON SPECIES WORKSHOPS

A Registration form for the workshops being held at UBC Botanical Garden by Douglas Justice is also attached at the end of the newsletter. It is quite possible that registration will be tight, so if you would like to attend you should consider sending in your registration soon.

Brenda Macdonald



Rhododendrons of China



Rhododendron forrestii ssp. forrestii



R. forrestii ssp. *forrestii*
Illustration by Lilian Snelling
Curtis' Botanical Magazine

Rhododendron forrestii var. *forrestii* Repens group has been a smashing success both with hybridizers and gardeners alike since George Forrest sent home specimens in 1914 and 1918. He had actually first collected the plant along the Mekong-Salween divide in Yunnan in 1905, but political unrest forced him to flee with only a scrap of a specimen to be sent back to England for cataloguing, and certainly nothing for propagation.

Quite possibly much of the impetus for the frantic hybridizing activity that commenced when this species became available was the desire to replicate such a compact, slow-growing plant with its out-sized radiantly crimson campanulate blossoms, but without its tricky siting requirements - in shallow peaty soil on top of huge boulders, or drooping down vertical cliff faces. Such locations were difficult to emulate in the average English garden. A cursory glance through Salley & Greer's *Rhododendron Hybrids* brings up over 40 hybrids before you even get out of the C's. Lord Aberconway himself, president of the Royal Horticultural Society and a man of remarkable industry if apparently limited imagination when it came to choosing names for

his new hybrids, chose *forrestii* as a parent in at least 8 of the 14 hybrids he registered beginning with the letter "A" (Abessa, Alan, Aldis, Adonis, Alre, Andis, Asta, etc.) R. 'Elizabeth' (*R. forrestii* ssp. *forrestii* Repens Group x *R. griersonianum*) was registered in 1929 by Lord Aberconway, and it has been a mainstay in hybridizing ever since.



R. forrestii ssp. *forrestii*
photo by Sean Rafferty
Rhododendron Species Foundation, 2004

Other notable local hybrids were Halfdan Len's 'Brilliant', which was Repens Group x *Ledum glandulosum*, making it, at the time, an inter-generic hybrid, and Greig's 'Cyril Berkeley', developed at their Royston Nursery, which used the more upright Tumescens Group rather than the prostrate Repens.

This is a variable species with a complicated taxonomic history occasioned by its various forms, but current thinking is that the differentiation between plants with green or purple undersides to the leaves is not relevant because populations in the wild show both forms growing side by side. The purple colouration is now thought to be only a form of persistent juvenility. Similarly the two varieties *repens* and *tumescens* are now accorded group status based on growth habit. It is the conspicuous glands on the leaf underside of *forrestii* ssp. *papillatum* that dictate its being given a separate subspecies designation.

In the wild, *forrestii* ssp. *forrestii* creeps over mossy boulders and in rocky meadows; its (usually) single, large, scarlet or crimson, terminal inflorescence blossoming in April or May. *Brenda Macdonald*

What's in Bloom ...



R. 'Yellow Hammer'

type: lepidote

cross: *sulfureum* x *flavidum*

size: upright, to 6' in 10 years

Although its growth habit can be somewhat straggly, and the individual blossoms are really quite diminutive, 'Yellow Hammer' redeems itself with its charmingly shaped, clear yellow flowers and almost continuous bloom period. When all other rhodos have finished their extravagant displays and your garden seems bare, go and look at Yellow Hammer and you will be sure to find a few sunny blossoms to light up your day.

North Vancouver/ 08 OCT 2007

...or just looking like it?



R. quinquifolium

epithet: leaves in groups of five

The symmetrical vase-shaped growth habit of *R. quinquifolium* makes the brightly-coloured leaf whorls look like they are fluttering in space.

North Vancouver/ 08 OCT 2007



R. 'Red Wood'

cross: *insigne* hybrid

epithet: from the deep red stems of the newer growth

size: to 6' in 10 years

The glossy bright crimson leaves peek out from under the dark green of the newer leaves like Christmas balls on a fir tree.

North Vancouver/ 08 OCT 2007



R. schlippenbachii

type: deciduous azalea

epithet: from Baron von Schlippenbach, Naval officer After the ethereal pink of the spring blossoms, and the graceful pale green whorls of the summer foliage, the warm peachy pink tones of the autumn foliage confirm *schlippenbachii's* year-round value.

North Vancouver/ 08 OCT 2007



R. 'PJM'

cross: *minus* var. *minus* Carolinianum Group x *dauricum* Sempervirens Group

Although our somewhat shady location prevents R. 'PJM' from reaching the deep mahogany colours of plants in sunnier sitings, this remains a dependable and attractive plant for fall colour.

North Vancouver/ 08 OCT 2007



R. aberconwayi

type: elepidote

epithet: after Lord Aberconway, a president of the RHS

size: to 3' in 10 years

The somewhat open habit and rigid, upright stance affords a good view of the heavily textured, deep crimson leaves that will be discarded over the following winter.

North Vancouver/ 08 OCT 2007

Membership



As in previous years it continues to be the intent of the Chapter officers to ensure that membership fees be kept as low as feasible in order to make our club accessible to all who wish to join. This year's fees will remain the same as last year's, with the current schedule being supported with a subsidy from other club revenues. Moreover the Chapter officers encourage all members to participate as Full Members, which includes membership and support for the parent organization, the American Rhododendron Society. It is through the ARS umbrella that many of the educational activities and the exchange of information and sharing of resources is made possible. A strong ARS, supported by Full Memberships all across the continent, is what makes our rhododendron community possible. All membership questions should be addressed to our Membership chair, Wenonah March, or any other of the FSRS officers.

Fraser South Rhododendron Society 2008 Membership Form

- New Membership
 Renewal Membership

Date _____
Name _____
Partner or Spouse's Name _____
Address _____
City _____
Province (State) _____
Postal (Zip) Code _____
Telephone Number _____
Fax Number _____
Email Address _____

All personal information collected by FSRS is for Society use only. Chapter members who would like their name and address to be included in the FSRS Member List - to be distributed to FSRS members only - and who wish to receive a copy of the FSRS newsletter, must indicate their consent by marking this box:

Please indicate the type of membership below, and enclose your payment with this registration form. All cheques should be made out to: **Fraser South Rhododendron Society**

- Full Member (includes ARS membership and quarterly ARS Journal) \$35.00
 Local Member (without ARS membership and Journal) \$20.00
 Associate (full member of other Canadian ARS chapter) \$10.00

Please indicate name of primary membership chapter _____

Registration Form
Rhododendron Species Workshops
At UBC Botanical Garden - Spring 2008
Instructor: Douglas Justice
Coordinator: Ron Knight

Demographics-Your name: _____
Street: _____
City: _____ Postal Code: _____
Telephone: _____ Email: _____
Member of which rhodo club? _____

Costs - Check which sessions you will be attending:

- March 1 - rhododendron anatomy; environmental needs; classification \$35
- March 22 - lepidotes and azaleas \$35
- April 5 - lepidotes \$35
- April 26 - photography; pests, diseases, and other problems \$35

Total before discount: \$ _____

Discount - Applies if you meet all 3 of these conditions:

- 1) You are a member of a District 1 rhododendron club.
- 2) Your registration will be mailed before December 1.
- 3) You are registering for all 4 sessions.

If you qualify, subtract \$20, for a subtotal of: \$ _____

Payment -- Total amount owing is: \$ _____

(Hint: For all 4 sessions with discount, enter \$120.)

Please mail a cheque payable to "Ron Knight" to
2710 Walpole Crescent, North Vancouver, BC, V7H 1K8.

NB - 25 spaces will be assigned on a first-come-first-served basis with priority given to rhodo club members who have paid for all 4 sessions. You will be notified before January if your registration is accepted.

More information -- Contact Ron Knight at: rcknight@telus.net