

The Yak

Newsletter of
the Fraser South
Rhododendron
Society

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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:

THE FRASER SOUTH
RHODODENDRON SOCIETY'S
RENOWNED
ANNUAL PICNIC
SATURDAY, JUNE 13TH

ANYTIME AFTER 2:00 PM

2009 Officers

President:	Harold Fearing	604-857-4136
Past Pres:	Dalen Bayes	360-966-4596
Vice Pres.:	Bill Bischoff	604-589-6134
Secretary:	Mary-Anne Berg	604-853-5737
Treasurer:	Alan March	604-532-9062
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	Lori Bayes	360-966-4596
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Programme:	Sean Rafferty	604-990-5353
Membership:	Wenonah March	604-532-9062
Newsletter:	Brenda Macdonald	604-990-5353
Website:	Chris Klapwijk	604-581-0925



Quick Hits

Note the abrupt change in direction!
Circumstances beyond anyone's control
have necessitated a last-minute change in
venue for our Annual Picnic.

Karen Linton and Larry Morton have graciously agreed to host
the picnic again this year.

See the last page for directions and a map.



From the President

Notes From the Chair

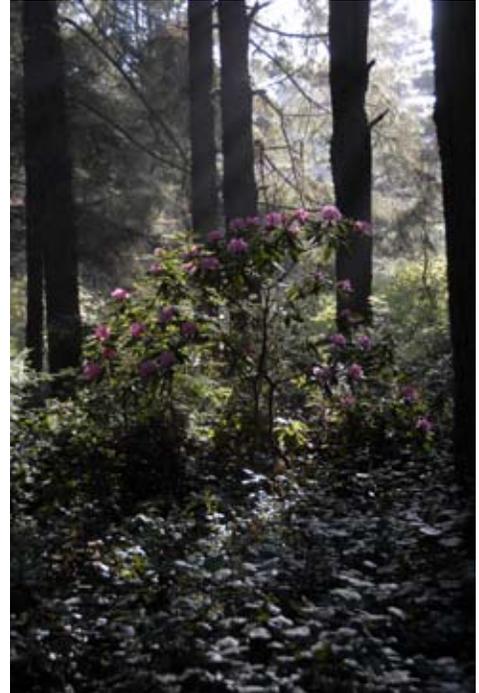
Now that it has finally warmed up, the rhodos have come out all at once, and many things are in bloom. I understand that the Beer Bottle Truss Show went well as usual, with lots of entries. Ginny and I were sorry to miss it.

We had taken the two middle weeks of May off for a camping trip down the coast of Oregon and eventually to the Redwood National Park in northern California. While we left our garden rhodos behind, we didn't abandon rhodos entirely as we had really nice displays of the two native west coast rhodos, *R. macrophyllum* and *R. occidentale*, all down the coast.

When we left home, the *R. macrophyllum* in our garden had not even begun to bloom. It actually got started only this last week. But by the time we got into Oregon, and



especially in southern Oregon and northern California, we were seeing it in full bloom along



R. macrophyllum

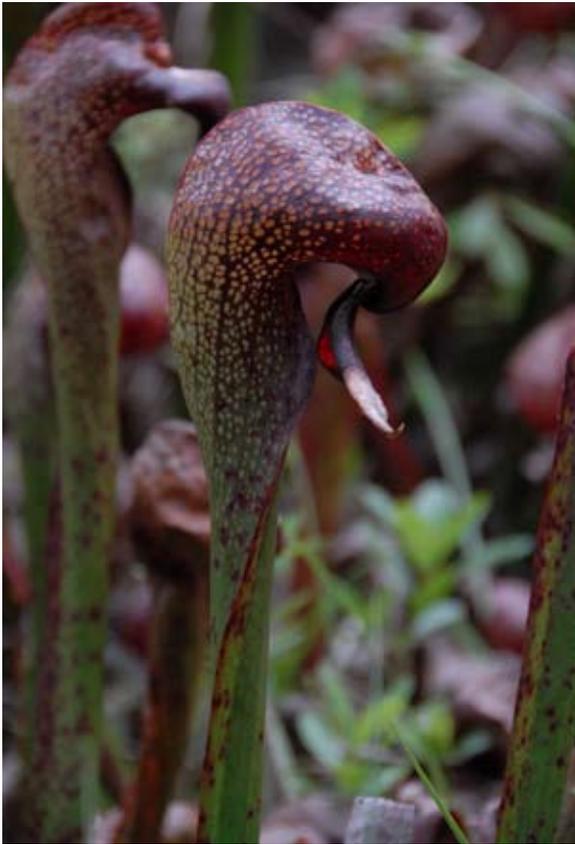
the roadsides and in the woods and campgrounds. Everywhere we saw it, its habitat was just as in Manning Park, that is, as the understory in a

coniferous forest, or along the edges of such a forest. The blooming was spotty though. A large patch at the entrance to one of the campgrounds in the Redwood National Park, which three years ago was blooming the last week in June, had not started. However there were patches in bloom just a few miles north and few miles south. I couldn't see any obvious environmental reason for this, though there may have been factors I didn't notice. Maybe different populations just bloom at different times. I suppose that would convey an evolutionary advantage. The rangers in the park said that *R. macrophyllum* were usually in bloom Mother's Day to Father's Day.

We also began to see *R. occidentale* by mid-Oregon, with really nice displays in southern Oregon and northern California. Years and years ago when I was a student, before I even knew what a rhododendron was, I found *R. occidentale* in the woods along streams in the mountains in the San Francisco Bay area. Thus I have always thought of it as a woodland plant. However I think that may not be correct. Certainly everything we saw on this trip was out pretty much in full sun and often in very dry terrain. One of the nicest displays was in a botanical wayside somewhere near the

R. occidentale





Darlingtonia californica, pitcher'

Oregon/California border. There was a serpentine swamp here, but the rhodos were on the dry rocky hillsides well above the swamp. There were scattered small pine trees but the rhodos were basically in full sun. They were doing very well - a mass of color and fragrance. *R. occidentale* can be quite variable in color. I have seen pictures of plants which are salmon colored, or have a lot of yellow, and we have a variety which is almost white. However everything we saw was a creamy pink with a yellow blotch. Having seen *occidentale* now in its native habitat, I think I will have to reevaluate how it is planted in our garden. If it stands full sun in California it certainly should take full sun here, and survive in relatively hot and dry corners of the garden.

An interesting companion plant, though not one we could grow, was common in the serpentine bog. That was the California pitcher plant or cobra lily, *Darlingtonia californica*. This is an



Darlingtonia californica, blossom'



Cypripedium californicum

insectivorous plant. The leaf or 'pitcher' is shaped so that insects which enter at the top can't easily get out. They eventually drown in the water collected in the leaf and are absorbed by the plant. I had seen the plant before occasionally but had never seen the flower. It arises on a stalk completely separate from the leaf and looks somewhat like a nodding lily.

Another real treat, growing along the edges of the serpentine bog, was an orchid, California lady's slipper, *Cypripedium californicum*. This apparently is often a companion to *Darlingtonia*, and was an orchid we had never seen before.

So now back to reality - weeds certainly grow fast in two weeks - but it was really fun to see some of our rhodos in their native habitats.

Harold Fearing



From the Editor

This Month:

RED ALERT

Everyone should note that the location of the annual June picnic has been changed from the March's to the Linton/Morton's. Other than that, everything is on sched and we should all get there between 2:00 and 3:00 with bells on, or at least carrying some significant items to auction off as part of our annual fund raising.

Here is the protocol, beautiful in its simplicity:

You have probably already been contacted by Karen Linton, who has done such a wonderful job of coordinating the potluck contributions, but 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 that 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

Next Month:

Then for the next two months the hallowed hall will be quiet and empty as we all shoulder our shovels and weeding tools and see if we can finally achieve the sort of attractive and self-maintaining garden the gardening books talk about. Personally, since we are, of course cutting-edge gardeners, I am going to continue to plant up our stump with primulas and ferns and tricky little epiphytic rhodos - most certainly now that we have found out that what we were doing out of necessity on our slice of wooded cliff side turns out to be the very latest in garden fashion.

The Business Stuff:

OTHER DUTIES AS ASSIGNED

☛ Tea room duties are suspended until our first meeting in the fall, on Wednesday, September 16th, at which time Mmes Sandra Procter and Peggy Brenne should be all primed for heating the kettles and putting out the cookies.

Brenda Macdonald



Up the Garden Path

Attending the ARS Spring 2009
Conference, Everett, WA

This year, the ARS conference got back to offering lectures as well as hosting garden tours. And, the conference organizers were very clever in arranging the good weather for the tours and garden visits and saving the rain for Sunday morning. The lectures I heard were all enjoyable and informative. Mike Stewart (ARS gold medal winner in 2009) gave an interesting talk about the history of northwest hybrids and their hybridizers. Since we'd seen many of the plants he discussed the day before at the Stipes garden, it was interesting to hear about the pioneers in rhody hybridizing as well as about the people making crosses today. I was especially interested to see how both Lem's Cameo and Nancy Evans are used as parents in so many crosses.

We're all interested in companion plants and Judith Jones from Fancy Fronds gave a great talk about hardy ferns. She's a real trooper and kept on talking even when the bulb burned out on her slide projector and no replacements were handy. She's obviously as passionate about ferns as we are about rhododendrons. I'd love to hear her again (with slide projector working), as she is a font of information. This talk was about the kinds of ferns available and their growing requirements, but she also alluded to her talk about the sex life of ferns, and I can only imagine how funny it might be. Sean, Brenda, Mary and I all heard her talk and we agreed she'd be great to have as a speaker, even if we got several chapters together and had her come for one night. Hopefully, she'd bring ferns to sell too. Her website is www.fancyfronds.com and by following the links, you can find a lot of information about growing various ferns.

An unusual talk presented by Dominique

Emerson concerned Art in the Garden. She discussed the selection and care of art in a garden environment. I had no idea about the complexities in caring for everything from bronze statuary to glass, to mosaics, or marble. Part of the decision in keeping art in the garden is whether or not you want to let it age with the elements, possibly shortening the work's lifespan but enjoying the patina that comes with exposure to the elements, or to keep a piece of work cleaned and polished. The best advice is to discuss how to care for a piece of art with the artist, letting them know that the work will be kept outside.

Kristi O'Donnell from Meerkerk Gardens showed pictures of the garden through the year, and commented on how they are trying to encourage year-round visitors by offering numerous programs that feature different plants and activities in all seasons. She had lovely pictures, and included a lot of information about the volunteers who help make the garden a success. As I mentioned in last month's Yak, the Meerkerk staff is working hard to offer children's programming in order to build support for the future. Like the Stipes at Glynneden Garden, the gardeners at Meerkerk have planted rhododendron hybrids created by Pacific Northwest hybridizers, and they do some variety evaluation of new hybrids too.

Steve Hootman from the Rhododendron Species Foundation gave two talks during the conference. As usual he was interesting, informative and humorous. In his first talk, he spoke of the changes that are underway or just completed at the RSBG. He was so enthusiastic and happy about recent developments in progress or just being completed. The new vireya house will be a welcome addition to the species collection, and won't it be great to see these beautiful plants grown well? And he talked about the stumpery that is due to be completed this summer. Never heard of a stumpery? Well, neither had I until this talk, but as usual, having heard the term once, now everywhere I go I seem to hear other people talking about stumperies. This is essentially a Victorian garden concept where large tree stumps are laid on their sides, with root edges exposed and ferns and fern allies are planted into the cracks and crevices of the root system.

In Europe, oak tree stumps are traditional,

but tree species native to the Pacific Northwest have been moved into place and are now being planted. The stumpery is due to be completed this summer. Steve also talked about the new propagation facilities and up-dated irrigation system at the RSBG.

In his second talk, he showed pictures of some of his trips into Southeast Asia, including some of his trip to Arunachal Pradesh in India. He had pictures of several plants that he thinks are new species to western science. We can look forward to great new plants. I was lucky enough to win one of the table centre piece plants of *Rhododendron excellens*, which Steve describes as a large flowered maddenii type that should be hardy in the Pacific Northwest. I'm looking forward to seeing it in bloom, and my plant has already doubled in size.

Dan Hinkley was the speaker after the banquet, and he gave an interesting talk about plant explorations in Nepal, and other places in southeast Asia. Hinkley is an accomplished speaker and gave an enjoyable talk with excellent slides.

The plant sale was interesting too, with lots of

hybrids and species to choose from. Dave Hammond from Hammond's Acres of Rhodys organized the sale as his "swan song" from the nursery business. He and his wife were retiring immediately after the conference. The fern lady (Judith Jones) had gorgeous plants to buy, and there were other nice companion plants too.

In spite of issues with Sudden Oak Death, it seems to be easier now to bring plants across the border than in years past. All that is needed is a phyto from the Washington State inspection service. Import permits from Agriculture Canada are no longer needed. It was interesting to hear though, that the Americans who were leaving Washington via air travel are now required to have a phyto with them to take plants back to their own home state.

The truss display and photo contest were well worth visiting, and if you were willing to bid, the silent auction had lovely items available. Still, the best part of the conference is the chance to "meet and greet" people who share their knowledge and enthusiasm for the genus rhododendron.

Norma Senn

Notes and Queries

From Harold Fearing:

Sometime last year, probably in the fall, I donated a plant of what was supposed to be *R. elliotii* to the raffle. At the time I wasn't sure if it was correctly identified, though it was an attractive plant. One plant in the greenhouse bloomed this year, and I think it actually is *R. elliotii*, a nice red with speckles on the petals.

However I lost more than half of the plants in the greenhouse over the winter and hadn't had the courage to plant one outside yet. I was curious whether whoever won the plant had it outside, and whether it survived.



Shared Wisdom

Carla Bischoff has sent along this fascinating photographic essay on the development of a flower bud of *R.* 'Windsong' from immature bud to full truss, illustrating that you don't always get what you think you will. The parentage of 'Windsong' sounds more like a Parent Teacher committee ['Nancy Evans' x ('Mrs. Betty Robertson' x 'Fred Rose')] than a rhododendron cross, but it does help to explain how a bud that starts off only slightly fat with a few reddish streaks, transforms into something vivid red that looks like it belongs to the Protea family, before settling down to a perfectly ordinary warm yellow truss with only a dot of red in the throat





Sixteenth Annual Fraser South Beer Bottle Truss Show

CLASSES

Division I

Species Classes

- Class 1. Rhododendron (lepidotes)
Joan McGiveron - R. xanthacodon
- Class 2. Azalea (deciduous and evergreen)
Wenonah March - unknown azalea
- Class 3. Hymenantha (elepidotes)
Larry Morton - R. degronianum ssp. yakushmanum

Division II

Hybrid Classes

- Class 4. Any lepidote hybrid
(no entry)
- Class 5. Any deciduous azalea hybrid
Norma Senn - R. 'Pink Inheritance'
- Class 6. Any evergreen azalea hybrid
Colleen Bojczuk - R. 'Kent's Pride'

Colour Classes

- Class 7a: Red - (small)
Larry Morton - R. 'Black Magic'
- 7b: Red - (large)
Bill & Carla Bischoff - R. 'Lem's Stormcloud'
- Class 8a: White - (small)
Larry Morton - R. 'Helene Schiffner'
- 8b: White - (large)
Sean Rafferty/Brenda Macdonald - R. 'Yeti'
- Class 9a: Pink - (small)
Matt & Cherry Groves - R. 'Vincent Van Gogh'
- 9b: Pink - (large)
Colleen Bojczuk - R. 'Graf Zeppelin'
- 9c: Pink - (really, really, large)
Vern Finley - R. 'Red Walloper'
- Class 10a: Yellow & Cream (small)
Lori Bayes - R. 'Nancy Evans'

- 10b: Yellow & Cream (large) - 2 way tie
Sean Rafferty/Brenda Macdonald - R. 'Crest'
Lori Bayes - R. 'Horizon Monarch'

- Class 11: Mauves & Purple
Colleen Bojczuk - R. 'Edith Bosley'
- Class 12: Orange
Lori Bayes - R. 'Kubla Khan'
- Class 13: Bi-colour
Colleen Bojczuk - R. Ooh Gina'

Division III

Special Classes

- Class 14: "What's it Called" - best new non-registered hybrid
Joan McGiveron - unnamed azalea seedling
- Class 15: Truss with the Best Fuzzy Foliage
Lori Bayes - R. 'Cinnamon Bear'
- Class 16: Best Blotched
Colleen Bojczuk - R. 'Bariton'
- Class 17: Best Speckled
Lori Bayes - R. 'Paprika Spiced'
- Class 18: Most Lurid
Colleen Bojczuk - R. 'Mrs. T. W. Lowinsky'
- Class 19: Best Last Year's Truss
Lori Bayes - unnamed
- Class 20: Most Elegantly Weevil-Notched
Larry Morton - unnamed
- Class 21: Best Hammerhead
Sean Rafferty/Brenda Macdonald - R. 'Yeti'
- Class 22: Most Flaccid -
Lori Bayes - R. cinnabarinum
- Class 23: Best Miniature Truss - under 6"
Karen Linton - R. kiusianum alba
- Class 24: Most Fragrant (Az. or Rh.)
Norma Senn - R. 'Lady Alice Fitzwilliam'

Lionheart Award for best over-all Yellow
Sean Rafferty/Brenda Macdonald - R. 'Crest'

Aggregate Winner and recipient of a brand new package of M&M's - Lori Bayes