

# The Yak

Newsletter of  
the Fraser South  
Rhododendron  
Society

Volume 22 Number 5  
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[www.flounder.ca/FraserSouth](http://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, May 20, 2009

## THE 16TH ANNUAL FRASER SOUTH RHODODENDRON SOCIETY JUSTLY FAMOUS BEER BOTTLE TRUSS SHOW



## 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
Directors:	Larry Morton	604-888-6564
	Lori Bayes	360-966-4596
	Arlene Darby	604-597-1849
Programme:	Sean Rafferty	604-990-5353
Membership:	Wenonah March	604-532-9062
Newsletter:	Brenda Macdonald	604-990-5353
Website:	Chris Klapwijk	604-581-0925



From the President

## Notes From the Chair

Finally, with the warmer weather we have had, the rhodos have started to come out. In fact in our garden I think things have pretty well caught up from the delays caused by the early cold weather, and as a result we have things blooming simultaneously which normally would not be.

For many years, when we were in Vancouver, I kept track of the date at which particular rhodos showed first color, peaked, and faded. While these dates varied from year to year for individual plants, the sequence was usually pretty much the same. However I had an interesting conversation with Sean Rafferty the other night. Sean and Brenda's garden in general is behind ours, as one might expect, as it is higher altitude, cooler, wetter and more shady than ours. However some varieties were actually ahead of those we had, indicating that the sequence in their garden was different than in ours.

Why should that be? I don't know. Presumably the flowers are triggered by environmental factors like length of day, amount of sunlight, temperature, etc. But to get different sequences the relative importance of these factors must be different for different varieties. Otherwise, for example, if it just depended on temperature, a cooler garden would be delayed, but everything would be delayed. Anyway, it sounds like a potentially interesting research project.

Our sale last weekend was a big success with gross sales 25-30% higher than in previous years. Thanks to everyone who pitched in and helped.

I saw Lori Bayes, Joan Bengough, Carla Bischoff, Arlene Darby, Kathy Delory, Karen Linton, Joan McGiveron, Nancy Moore, Larry Morton, Marge Mueller, and Paul and Henriette Pieron helping with set up or take down, working as cashiers, or helping with sales. Thanks also to the unsung heroes, whom I may have missed seeing in all the confusion.

The truss display was great, thanks to Chris Klapwijk who collected many of the trusses and sent them and the vases in with the Bischoffs, and to Colleen Bojczuk who brought some trusses as well. Special thanks to Paul Pieron who brought in some plants from their garden as donations and took charge of selling them.

Finally thanks to all the sellers, Doreen and Trevor Badminton, Colleen Bojczuk, Bill and Carla Bischoff, Les Clay, Sue Klapwijk, Sandy Proctor, and Giff Robb, without



*R. augustinii* 'Bergie'



*R. augustinii* 'Berkley's Blue'



*R. augustinii* ssp. *hardyi*



*R. augustinii* 'Electra'

whom we wouldn't have a sale.

Finally, I can't resist mentioning, and showing a few pictures, of one of my favorite rhodos, *R. augustinii*, of which many varieties are now in bloom. Most are of various shades of blue or purple, ranging from the fairly dark 'Electra' through lighter shades like 'Tower Court', 'Hobie', 'Bergie', 'Berkeley's Blue' and a new one from the RSF, 'Cerulean Mist'. The partially deciduous ssp. *hardyi* has bloomed for me this year for the first time. It is pure white, with a bit of yellow spotting. At the moment it is a pretty small plant, but if it does as well as the other *augustinii*'s it will be a spectacular contrast to the others. Our clone of ssp. *chasmanthum*, which seems to be a pinker than normal, is again putting on a tremendous show. One could almost have a whole garden of various *augustinii*, but of course then one would miss out on all of the other spectacular species!

*Harold Fearing*



*R. augustinii* 'Hobie'



*R. augustinii* 'Cerulean Mist'



*R. augustinii* 'Tower Court'



*R. augustinii* ssp. *chasmanthum*



Here is a snapshot of our own Matt Groves in front of some of his award-winning daffodils. Matt, a long time daffodil grower in Bradner and Mount Lehman, returned from the American Daffodil Society National Convention held April 25-27 in Chicago with ribbons a-plenty. Attended by growers from the US, England, Ireland and New Zealand, he was the only participant from Canada. Matt won first, second and third place ribbons for three of his varieties of double pink daffodils. In addition, his daffodils in other categories won a total of 7 first-place ribbons, 8 second-place, 10 third-place and 3 honorable mentions, including an honourable mention for one of his own hybrids. He was also the recipient of a special Judges Choice Award for one of his photographs.

Kudos to Matt!



From the Editor

## This Month:

This month we should all be participating in our 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Justly Famous Beer Bottle Truss Show. The envy of forward-thinking rhodo societies everywhere, this is a function not overwhelmed by a hierarchy of regulations or stifled by elitist judges. It is essentially a democratic exercise – think of it as the horticultural equivalent of Canadian Idol

You remember the rules: Rule 1 - bring some flowers in. Rhodos are nice, and they fit in the beer bottle vases quite handily, but if you have something else blossoming right now that is strange, spectacular, or possibly the only plant in your garden that has finally broken winter dormancy, bring it along. It may not win one of the rhodo categories, but it will be sure to gladden someone's heart. Rule 2 - bring something you can fill with water to place the flowers in. Beer bottles (not cans) are often the vase of choice because they are usually ready to hand and sturdy enough to support the top-heavy trusses. Rule 3 - sign up with the official show convenor - Wenonah March - obtain your personal entry

number, mark you entry card with the name of the rhodo and your entry number, and place your contribution on one of the tables beside whichever of the category cards is most appropriate. (See page 9 for the category listings.) Rule 4 - when all the contributions have been designated and placed, pick up your baggy of beads and start the voting! Remember: one category, one bead. There has been no groundswell within our Chapter for an STV voting reform so we will continue with the first past the post process, otherwise known as "that with the most beads wins". Rule 5 - having completed your democratic responsibility, retire to the tea room for refreshment while our team of auditors from the firm of Calyx, Sepals, Pistil and Style tabulate the results. Rule 6 - Cheer and clap for the winners.

Trust me, you'll like it.

## Next Month:

Next month will be our final event of the year - our annual Picnic and Auction. It will be held on Saturday, June 13th at the home of Alan and Wenonah March. More information in next month's issue, but in the meantime, keep an eagle eye out for possible auction items. Remember, this is our other major fund-raising activity of the year, which not only allows us to socialize and eat ourselves silly, it also affords us the opportunity to satisfy our inner antiques-roadshow geek and bid on all sorts of treasures we never knew we needed.

## The Business Stuff:

☛ Don't forget!

Each year our Chapter makes a contribution to the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden for an Associate Membership. This Associate Membership qualifies all members of Fraser South Rhododendron Society to free entry to the Garden. Just advise the person at the Entrance Gate of your affiliation and you will be admitted free. Located in Federal Way, Washington (between Seattle and Tacoma) this is a wonderful woodland garden, with 22 acres of rhodos, companion plants and trees, and an amazing new "stumpery" that will astound and delight you.

### OTHER DUTIES AS ASSIGNED .....

☛ Mmes Carla Bischoff and Karen Linton will be manning the samovars during our BB Truss Show, so all that remains is for Sandra Procter and Peggy Brenne to take custody of the Supply Box until next year's September meeting.

*Brenda Macdonald*



When I arrived at the Peace Arch border crossing on my way home from the ARS conference in Everett Washington, the border guard asked what I'd been doing in Everett. When I told her I'd been at a rhododendron conference, she wanted to know what on earth people would do at such an event. She was genuinely curious, and not trying to be difficult. So, I told her there were all these nice people from around the world who liked to get together to talk about rhodies, look at rhodies, take pictures of rhodies, hear talks about rhodies and visit wonderful gardens featuring rhodies. She was interested enough to want to know what there was about rhododendrons that made them so special, but how can one explain what it is we all enjoy so much in a 30 second conversation? So, I told her (briefly) about the variety of flower types, all the flower colours, and that the Pacific Northwest is a great place to garden and grow rhodies. She said her parents had a couple of nice big red ones in their garden, and yes, they were very pretty. Who knows, maybe I've sparked some interest.

An ARS conference really is a great place to see, hear and talk about rhododendrons and the Everett conference was very enjoyable and ran smoothly. I arrived at noon on Thursday, just in time to hop on the bus for my first tour. We visited two lovely gardens Thursday afternoon, one was Jeanine and Rex Smith's garden, the other to Rhody Ridge. Both are woodland gardens with native overhead vegetation providing shade and shelter. The gardens have some elevation changes which gives a pleasing sense of walking in the woods. We were fortunate in the weather during the tour days, and it was great to be outside enjoying the sunshine.

## Up the Garden Path

Attending the ARS Spring 2009  
Conference, Everett, WA

The Smith garden has over 160 different species and 350 hybrids with about 900 individual plants of azaleas and rhododendrons. One of the hybrids I fell in love with on this trip was *R. 'Avalanche'* ('Loderi' x *calophytum*). We saw it first at the Smith's, but in other gardens too. This is an large old hybrid with snow white flowers and a small cerise red spot in the throat – just gorgeous. The Smith's have some wonderful herbaceous under-plantings of things like trilliums, hellebores, hardy ferns, and primulas. They have also planted numerous deciduous trees that add flower, bark interest and fall colour to the garden, things like *Stewartia*, *Oxydendron*, and *Parrotia*, as well as many small maples. I learned a new term from the Smith's write-up about their garden; they, like the

rest of us are suffering from "zone denial" and sadly, they lost several maddeniiis and big leaf species this past winter.

Not far from the Smith's garden is Rhody Ridge

Arboretum Park. This is a mature 11 acre garden that will eventually become a county park. The owners have lived on the property for decades, and planted and planned the garden right from the beginning to be left as a legacy to the area. The property has many large specimens of older rhododendron varieties, as well as some great trees and shrubs, including the largest *Stachyurus praecox* ("Spiketail") I've ever seen. In fact, I hadn't realized that *Stachyurus* can get that big. Our timing was perfect to enjoy seeing sweeping patches of *Anemone nemerosa* at their peak. As well, the *R. schlippenbachiis* made a nice show, growing the way I like them, in amongst the trees so that their soft pink flowers add spots of brightness to the woods. The one problem with Rhody Ridge is



*R. 'Avalanche'*  
garden of Rex and Jeanine Smith



A swath of *Anemone nemerosa*  
Rhody Ridge Arboretum Park

that the plants are not labelled, and there was lots of discussion among the tour participants about getting plants identified as soon as possible as that information is in the owner's head. It would add so much to the educational nature

of the arboretum to have things positively identified. I understand that based on the visit to this garden, one of the local ARS chapters will try and do something about labelling soon.

The next day, I opted for the day-long trip to Whidbey Island. My bus visited Meerkerk Gardens first. It's been several years since I was there, so it was fun to see how things have grown. Meerkerk is becoming a local gathering place for lots of community activities. Based on Kristi O'Donnell's presentation the night before, it sounds like the staff and volunteers at the Gardens are making a concerted effort to offer programs and events that attract children, in the hopes of creating interest in plants and gardens over the long term.

There are new propagation facilities and gatehouse, and of course, there's a sales yard. I wasn't



*R. 'Seaview Sunset'*  
a Frank Fujioka hybrid

planning on buying anything on this trip, but what a silly idea! Meerkerk had lots of one gallon plants of things like 'Seaview Sunset' and 'Starbright

Champagne', and I just had to have them. I've been mentally berating myself ever since for not having bought a few more of Frank Fujioka's hybrids while I was there – his 'Vibrant Violet' and 'Saffron Silk' are gorgeous.

One of the things I enjoy at Meerkerk is the "Big-Leaved Rhododendron Valley" (pictured above, as

this month's "Garden Path") and the big-leaved plants have certainly grown since the last time I visited. Some had suffered some winter damage, but overall, the plants looked remarkably good.

Our next stop was at Glynneden Gardens, the home of Bill and Mary Stipe. This was an enjoyable stop because, among other things, there is a Northwest Hybridizers' display garden. It was fun to see so many locally bred plants laid out in beds, each bed organized by hybridizer. The next day, one of the lecture sessions reviewed hybrids and hybridizers from the Pacific Northwest, so it was interesting to have seen the plants and then hear Mike Stewart's talk.

Our last stop on the tour was at Frank Fujioka's garden. Wow! There's just no other word to describe it. In his write up Frank says that his garden is a



*R. 'Saffron Silk'*  
a Frank Fujioka hybrid

working garden and not a true display garden, but he certainly has an eye for plant placement. I mentioned 'Vibrant Violet' and 'Saffron Silk' above and there's an area where these two hybrids are planted together and the colour contrast draws the eye from all directions. It's fun to look at Frank's labels to see what plants are being used as parents for potential new hybrids. And, there are many things to see here besides Rhododendrons as Frank has an interesting collection of Japanese maples and some wonderful small conifers.

As well as the scheduled bus tours, members of the local ARS Chapters hosted open gardens that could be visited individually during the conference. I didn't have enough time to



*R. albrechtii*  
garden of Don King and Prudence Holliger

get to any except for Don King and Prudence Holliger's garden in Issaquah. Fellow FSRS members Garth Wedemire, Mary Berg and I, plus Bill McMillan from the Victoria Chapter, made a fast trip to see this lovely garden on Saturday afternoon. Bill, Mary and I had travelled with Prudence in China, so we not only wanted to see their garden, but also to see Prudence and catch up on the past three years. Don and Prudence garden on a semi-rural hillside that offers great drainage, but also possible predation from local wildlife. I remember Prudence talking about needing to build a better fence around their property to keep the local deer and elk out, but also keep the bobcats and cougars away from their small dogs.

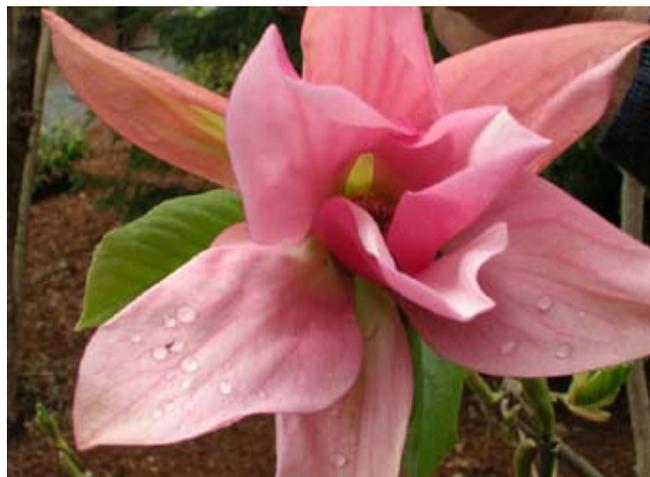
They have some great species rhododendrons (*R. pentaphyllum* and *R. albrechtii* were particularly memorable that day), and there were some very nice Magnolias in bloom. A lovely little *Phylliopsis* was in full bloom and a *Calanthe* orchid was just emerging.

I was sorry not to have been able to get to see some of the other open gardens, and I've just got to get

back to the Rhododendron Species Foundation Garden soon. But, so many gardens... so little time...

More about the conference next month.

*Norma Senn*



*Magnolia 'Daybreak'*  
garden of Don King and Prudence Holliger

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#### THE CALENDAR:

<b>Saturday, May 16</b>	<b>Open Garden - Lu Zhu Garden, Mike and Patti Bale</b> <b>12:00 pm to 5:00 pm</b> <b>call 604-853-8839 for directions</b>
<b>Saturday, May 16</b> <b>Sunday, May 17</b>	<b>Vancouver Orchid Society, 2009 Show and Sale</b> <b>Saturday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm</b> <b>Sunday, 10:00 am to 4:00 pm</b> <b>Richmond Curling Club, 5540 Hollybridge Way, Richmond</b>
<b>Wednesday, May 20</b>	<b>Fraser South Chapter - 16th Annual FSRS</b> <b>Beer Bottle Truss Show</b>
<b>Saturday, May 23</b>	<b>Open Garden - Bill and Carla Bischoff</b> <b>11:00 am to 4:00 pm</b> <b>call 604-589-6134 for directions</b> <b>in conjunction with Alpine Garden Society of BC</b> <b>(no pets and no smoking, please)</b>
<b>Monday, May 25</b>	<b>Fraser Valley - Rosemary Prufer</b> <b>"Last Year's Trip to New Zealand"</b>
<b>Saturday, May 30</b>	<b>Darts Hill Garden Garden Tour and Plant Sale</b> <b>10:00am - 4:00pm</b> <b>16th Avenue at 170 Street, Surrey</b>
<b>Saturday, June 13</b>	<b>Fraser South Annual Picnic and Auction</b> <b>Alan and Wenonah March</b> <b>Call 604-532-9062 for directions</b>



## Sixteenth Annual Fraser South Beer Bottle Truss Show

The world famous Fraser South Beer Bottle Truss Show will be held at our May meeting, Wednesday, May 21<sup>st</sup>. This is a fun event in which everyone can participate.

Here are the rules, beautiful in their simplicity:

1. **Entry to the hall will be by bringing at least one truss. It is not necessary that it be a rhododendron.**
2. There will be three areas for display:
  - a. competitive rhododendron trusses
  - b. non-competitive rhododendron trusses
  - c. companion plant displays.
3. For the competitive event, participants will be allowed to enter only one truss in each class. Additional trusses can be displayed on the non-competitive table.
4. To assist in deciding which class to enter, an Advisory Panel will provide guidance and make any final decisions necessary.
5. All trusses must be in glass bottles. (Cans and plastic pop bottles are too unstable.)
6. Judging will be by member votes. Having given up on the too-sticky Smarties, we will be continuing with last year's counting beads. Just drop your bead in the receptacle in front of the truss you wish to vote for.

### CLASSES Division I

#### Species Classes

- Class 1. Rhododendron (lepidotes)
- Class 2. Azalea (deciduous and evergreen)
- Class 3. Hymenantha (elepidotes)

### Division II

#### Hybrid Classes

- Class 4. Any lepidote hybrid

- Class 5. Any deciduous azalea hybrid
- Class 6. Any evergreen azalea hybrid

#### Colour Classes

- Class 7a: Red - (small)
- 7b: Red - (large)
- Class 8a: White - (small)
- 8b: White - (large)
- Class 9a: Pink - (small)
- 9b: Pink - (large)
- 9c: Pink - (really, really, large )
- Class 10a: Yellow & Cream (small)
- 10b: Yellow & Cream (large)
- Class 11: Mauves & Purple
- Class 12: Orange
- Class 13: Bi-colour

### Division III

#### Special Classes

- Class 14: "What's it Called" - best new non-registered hybrid - a special class for the hybridizer
- Class 15: Truss with the Best Fuzzy Foliage
- Class 16: Best Blotched
- Class 17: Best Speckled
- Class 18: Most Lurid
- Class 19: Best Last Year's Truss
- Class 20: Most Elegantly Weevil-Notched
- Class 21: Best Hammerhead
- Class 22: Most Flaccid
- Class 23: Best Miniature Truss - under 6"
- Class 24: Most Fragrant ( Az. or Rh. )
- Class 25: Lionheart Award for best over-all Yellow

#### Definitions:

1. Small - 6" or under
2. Large - 6" to 10"
3. Really, Really, Large - over 10"
4. Blotch - each individual flower shows a solid colour mark on dorsal lobe (or three lobes), distinctly different from the base colour of the flower.
5. Lurid - most vividly garish
6. Hammerhead - an inflorescence which arises from more than a single flower bud
7. Speckled - distinguished from blotches by non-solid colour sprinkles and spots, either around entire flower, or at least on upper lobe(s) - e.g. 'Paprika Spiced'