

The Yak

Newsletter of
the Fraser South
Rhododendron
Society

Volume 22 Number 7
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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
(except July and August) at:
United Church Hall
5673 - 200th Street
Langley BC

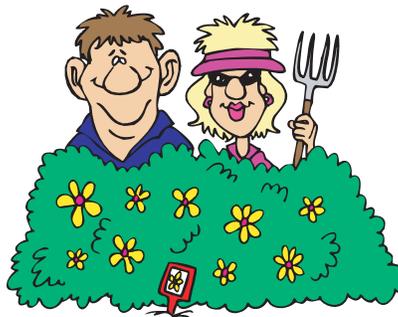
This Month's Meeting

Date: Wednesday, September 16, 2009
Topic: "Travels in China : Sichuan-Qinghai"
Speaker: Chris Klapwijk
Plant Sales Sue Klapwijk

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

Quick Hits



Drop that hose!

Step away from the secateurs!

Come out from behind that
shrubbery!

It's time to resume our
Rhodo meetings for the year
2009/2010.

Come and renew old acquaintances; bring a friend so we can
all make new ones.

It has been a glorious summer and there will be lots to
discuss.



From the President

Notes From the Chair

“Irrational exuberance” - that is a phrase coined by Alan Greenspan, when he was Chairman of the US Federal Reserve system, to refer to the tremendous enthusiasm in the mid 1990’s for stocks, with no thought for the future. As we know, that period led to a rapid increase in stock prices followed by an even more rapid decrease when the dot-com bubble burst and reality set in.

I was musing about this, and wondering if the term could apply to gardeners as well, as I was potting seedlings up to one gallon pots this summer. As I had potted up more than 2000 pots at the time, I decided perhaps I had been overly exuberant in planting seeds last year and should try to be a bit more rational next time. I could see also that the term might apply to someone like the gardener who plants 12 zucchini plants, so that they will have a few zucchini to share with friends, not realizing that in our climate one plant usually requires a wheelbarrow to cart away the crop.

However the term really applies to my experiences with vireya seedlings. But to tell that story I have to go back a few years to 2006 when Fraser South hosted the Western Regional ARS Conference at Harrison Hot Springs. On a whim I had earlier that year bought several vireyas from the Rhododendron Species Foundation, but didn’t know much about them. At that meeting I had a conversation with Glen Jamieson, who is an enthusiast and the BC expert on vireyas and, now, the new editor of the ARS Journal. He told me about them, showed me some samples and convinced me that I had made a good decision to give them a try.



R. celebicum

As most of you know vireyas are tropical rhododendrons, natives of Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and surrounding areas. There are some 300 species, so vireyas make up a significant fraction of the species in the genus *Rhododendron*. Although they are from the tropics, they grow mostly in the forests in the mountains, where it is cooler, moist and shady. Thus in the summer here they do just fine in a shaded, open greenhouse or place in the garden. Many are epiphytic, so they need very well drained soil, similar to orchids. Most do not stand freezing temperatures however, so in the winter they have to be brought inside and treated like house plants. Those that I have seen in flower, mostly at the RSF, can be spectacular as flowers, though often a bit straggly as plants.

Anyway as a result of this conversation with Glen I bought a few more at the next RSF plant sale the following year. So for several years we have been growing a half dozen or so vireyas. In the summer they are in our open poly-greenhouse where they are regularly watered by the sprinkler system. In the winter we have brought them in to a table by the window in my office, and I have conned Ginny into taking care of them, watering and feeding them along with her orchids.

There are many leaf shapes and sizes, just as for the temperate rhododendron species. One I have, *R. phaeochitum*, has new leaves covered with a rusty indumentum on both surfaces, which is rather attractive. Another, *R. celebicum*, has bloomed now for two years, even as a small plant. The flowers are tubular, red or pink, and hang down in clusters of a few. Individually the flowers are not that spectacular, but at least in the second year the plant was covered with blooms, with at least some blossoms showing over several months as I remember. And another, *R. retusum*, has bloomed once, in February, with a cluster of red/orange flowers. In the house, when nothing else was blooming, they were really nice.

So, buoyed by some success with vireya plants I ordered some seeds last year from the RSF seed exchange.

They sprouted nicely and are now at the seedling stage, just a few inches high in a couple of flats. The two most successful were *R. kawakamii* and *R. armitii*. *R. kawakamii* has open clusters of light yellow flowers. It is a native of Taiwan. *R. armitii* comes from Papua New Guinea, has long tubular white or pink flowers, and from the picture looks like it will be really nice. (Thanks to Glen Jamieson for providing the pictures of these two.)

But in my exuberance I didn't think about the future. This winter I can easily keep a couple of flats in the basement under lights, but next summer these plants will go into one gallon pots and next winter I will have 50 or 60 one gallon pots that have to be overwintered



R. kawakamii



R. retusum

inside. Even Ginny, though she is a saint, is not going to allow me to bring that many pots into our living room! What to do? I don't know. Maybe I will sell some next summer, or maybe I will have some nice contributions to our raffle a year from now. In the meantime, though it has been a bit irrational, I have had fun trying out this new group of rhododendrons.

As we start a new year I hope all of you will bring your exuberance, (rational I hope), to our meetings, along with friends and others who might be interested in joining us. We have good programs coming up. We will have our usual plant sales and raffles at the meetings, as well as the goodies FSRS is famous for. So come join the fun!

Harold Fearing



R. armitii



From the Editor

This Month:

We will be able to ease back into meeting mode with a program presented, if not created, by Chris Klapwijk, on the Sichuan-Qinghai area of China. According to Bill Bischoff this is a fascinating look at the area, and will include not only botanical information and images of the area, but also glimpses of its cultural aspect.

Next Month:

TBA

The Business Stuff:

- ✿ Our Treasurer, Alan March, reports that this year's Plant Sale (May 2, 2009) was a well-deserved success, with gross plant sales almost \$1000 greater than the last few years. Congratulations and gratitude are due to all those who so ably managed this important annual funds raiser.

- ✿ Full details about the financial results of both the Plant Sale and the Annual

Picnic and Auction will be available in next month's issue.

OTHER DUTIES AS ASSIGNED

- ✿ First up for the September meeting Tea Room duties are Sandra Proctor and Peggy Brenne, while Ginny Fearing and Mary-Anne Berg should gird their loins in preparation for October's travails.

THE CALENDAR:

Wednesday, September 16	Fraser South Chapter - Chris Klapwijk "Travels in China : Sichuan-Qinghai"
Thursday, September 17	Vancouver Chapter - Chip Muller "Wolong Nature Preserve, Sichuan, 1986 and 2006"
Thursday, September 17 to Sunday, September 20	2009 Western Regional Fall Conference Tacoma, Washington
Tuesday, September 22	Peace Arch Chapter - Les Clay and Giff Rob "Rhododendron Propagation"
Monday, September 28	Fraser Valley Chapter - Colleen Forster "Fall Colour in the Garden"
Thursday, October 15	Vancouver Chapter - Steve Hootman "Not the Same Old RSF"
Wednesday, October 21	Fraser South Chapter - TBA
Monday, October 26	Fraser Valley Chapter - TBA
Tuesday, October 27	Peace Arch Chapter - Steve Hootman "The Ongoing Search for New Species"

Brenda Macdonald

THE ULTIMATE RHODODENDRON CONFERENCE

For all gardeners who would like
to learn more about rhododendrons



April 9 – 11, 2010

At Canada's premier rhododendron garden:
The University of British Columbia Botanical Garden
and Centre for Plant Research
Vancouver, BC

TEACHERS:

Douglas Justice is the Associate Director and Curator of Collections at UBC Botanical Garden (www.ubcbotanicalgarden.org) and is an instructor at UBC, teaching horticulture and plant identification courses. Prior to joining the Botanical Garden, Douglas taught plant identification, integrated pest management, and nursery production courses at Kwantlen University College in Langley. He is a member of the Vancouver Rhododendron Society and, with his wife Karen, edited the VRS newsletter "Indumentum" for a number of years. Douglas holds a Bachelors Degree in Horticulture and a Masters in Botany, both from UBC. Douglas will be teaching all Level 2 conference sessions which will include lecture/slide presentations, laboratory experiences, and field studies in the garden. (Limited to 70 students)

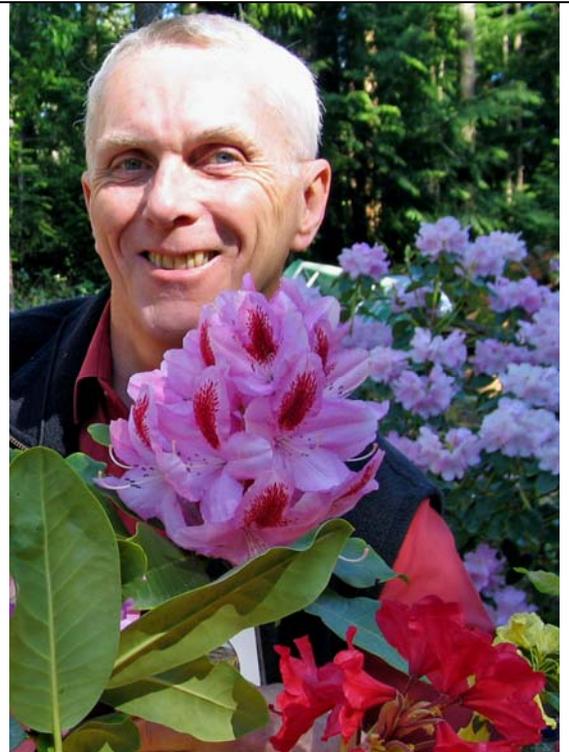
Ron Knight is a past president of the Vancouver Rhododendron Society and the current Director for the American Rhododendron Society's BC Division. He and his wife Carla have created Caron Gardens, at Pender Harbour, where they display 400 different hybrid rhododendrons and 100 species (www3.telus.net/rcknight). Caron Gardens welcomes hundreds of visitors each year and has been featured in Gardens West magazine and on television. Prior to retirement, Ron was a biology teacher and secondary school administrator. He holds a Bachelors Degree in Science from Concordia University in Montreal and a Masters Degree in Education from UBC. Ron will be teaching all Level 1 conference sessions which will include lecture/slide presentations, hands-on activities, and field studies in the garden.

CHOOSE FROM 2 LEARNING LEVELS:

Level 1 is aimed at newer rhododendron collectors and at general perennial gardeners who want to learn to grow the most spectacular rhododendrons on their block.

Topics will include current best-practice information and practical advice about:

- * Rhododendron environmental needs and how to duplicate them in your garden
- * Rhododendron and perennial pruning
- * Rhododendron culture and care, irrigation, and pest and disease management
- * Garden design to incorporate rhododendrons and prevent future problems
- * How to choose superior rhododendrons for your area
- * The best dwarf rhododendrons for rock gardens, containers, and small garden spaces
- * A yearly rhododendron maintenance calendar
- * Websites with excellent information on rhododendron gardening



Level 2 is designed for confirmed rhodoholics and veteran rhododendron collectors.

Topics will include research-based information and practical advice about:

- * The best species rhododendrons for Pacific Northwest gardens and how to grow them
- * Rhododendron anatomy as seen with a projected dissection microscope
- * Using keys to distinguish between closely-related and often-confused species
- * Low tech ways to propagate rhododendrons from seed or cuttings
- * The importance of salts, pH and micronutrients; pH and soil nutrient testing
- * How to solve the 10 worst problems of rhododendron culture and care
- * Highly recommended reference books on hybrid and species rhododendrons



REGISTRATION AND COSTS:

The conference registration fee is \$155 (in both Canadian and US dollars) and includes:

- * 6 ninety-minute learning sessions at either Level 1 or Level 2
- * A folder of notes from all 6 sessions
- * Saturday and Sunday lunches and coffee breaks
- * Free admission to UBC Botanical Garden (not including the tree-top canopy walk)
- * Complimentary parking at UBC Botanical Garden
- * Rhododendron experts leading the Friday garden tours

Everyone who registers in 2009 receives a discount and the fee is \$130.

Registration is on a first-come-first-served basis and is limited to 100 gardeners. It's easy:

Simply print a registration form at www.rhodos.ca and mail it with your Canadian or US cheque (**made out to Ron Knight**) to: Ultimate Rhododendron Conference, 2710 Walpole Crescent, North Vancouver, B.C., V7H 1K8, Canada. (The United States registration fee is for the same dollar amount as the Canadian fee to allow us to recover banking costs associated with foreign currency and checks.)

You will receive confirmation by email that your cheque has arrived and a space is reserved for you. For further information, email Ron at: rknight@telus.net (NB. All conference communication will occur via email. If you do not own a computer, your local librarian will help you set up a free gmail account.)

WHAT THIS CONFERENCE DOES NOT OFFER:

There are no banquets, raffles, keynote speeches, contests, truss shows, bus tours, business meetings, or entertainment events. The Ultimate Rhododendron Conference is ultimately concerned with relevant learning about rhododendrons and rhododendron gardening. You will be very busy all day long but will have evenings free to relax and enjoy Vancouver and the UBC campus. Your registration package will contain maps and brochures about optional tourist attractions and entertainment events on Friday and Saturday evenings.

ACCOMMODATION, MAPS, AND MEALS:

We recommend three hotels, all within 15 minutes' driving time of UBC Botanical Garden:

- 1) West Coast Suites - located on campus 2 km from the garden. (www.ubcconferences.com).
(Separate bedroom; kitchen; shuttle bus to garden; your best bet if you don't have a car.)
- 2) Coast Vancouver Airport Hotel - located in Vancouver, half-way between the airport and UBC.
(www.coasthotels.com/hotels/canada/bc/vancouver/coast_vanairport/overview)
(Bed and breakfast special available; our best-value recommendation.)
- 3) Granville Island Hotel - on Vancouver's waterfront. (www.granvilleislandhotel.com)
(Luxury rooms and suites, recently renovated; approximately same price as #1 above; excellent restaurant, boutiques and public market nearby. Ask for the UBC conference/corporate rate.)

No blocks of rooms have been pre-booked at any hotel by the conference organizers. Please make your room reservations early, by contacting the hotel directly.

There are other fine hotels within 15 minutes' driving time from UBC. Visit:

www.bestlodging.worldres.com and sort by "Hotels near University of British Columbia".

Breakfasts, dinners, and Friday lunch are your own responsibility and there are several reasonably priced restaurants within walking distance of each hotel. VanDusen Botanical Garden has its own restaurant.

For a good map to UBC, visit www.ubcbotanicalgarden.org, and click on "Directions".

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE:

Friday, April 9:

- 8:30 – 12:00 Registration and plant sales (no phytos available)
9:00 – 12:00 Guided tours of UBC Botanical Garden -- featuring species rhododendrons;
Tours at 9:00 or 10:30 (www.ubcbotanicalgarden.org)
2:00 – 5:00 Guided tours of the world-class VanDusen Botanical Garden's Rhododendron Walk
and Sino-Himalayan Garden -- admission fee; Tours at 2:00 or 3:30
(www.vancouver.ca/Parks/parks/vandusen/website/index.htm).

Saturday, April 10:

- 8:30 – 9:30 Registration, coffee, purchase plants (no phytos available)
10:00 – 11:30 Session A
11:30 – 1:00 Lunch, then time to purchase plants or stroll through the garden
1:00 – 2:30 Session B
2:45 – 4:15 Session C

Sunday, April 11:

- 8:30 – 9:00 Coffee time; purchase plants (no phytos available)
9:00 – 10:30 Session D
10:45 – 12:15 Session E
12:15 – 1:15 Lunch
1:15 – 2:45 Session F
2:45 – 5:00 Head home or
Optional visit to Nitobe Memorial Japanese Garden at UBC, (www.nitobe.org)
or the UBC Museum of Anthropology (www.moa.ubc.ca); admission fees.

(NB: This schedule allows Vancouver Island residents who cannot come to UBC on Friday, to arrive in time for Session A on Saturday by catching the first ferry sailing and to return home on a supper-time ferry on Sunday. Seattle area residents should plan on a three-hour drive to UBC.)

**REGISTER
NOW**

www.rhodos.ca

