

# The Yak

Newsletter of  
the Fraser South  
Rhododendron  
Society

Volume 24 Number 3  
March 2010



[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  
(except June, July and August) at:  
United Church Hall  
5673 - 200th Street  
Langley BC

## This Month's Meeting

Date: Wednesday, March 17, 2010  
Topic: "Photo Composition"  
Speaker: Mark Turner  
Plant Sales: Bill Bischoff

## 2010 Officers

President:	Bill Bischoff	604-589-6134
Past Pres:	Harold Fearing	604-857-4136
Vice Pres:	John Dodd	604-530-0153
Secretary:	Sandy Procter	604-857-0440
Treasurer:	Alan March	604-532-9062
Directors:	Arlene Darby	604-597-1849
	Lori Bayes	360-966-4596
	Matt Groves	604-856-2624
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

And here we are  
...rolling out the red  
carpet of welcome to  
our new members,  
Brit and Jim Finley, of  
Sardis.

And, again, speaking  
of members, attached please find the latest iteration  
of the Membership list, encompassing corrections to  
the occasional typo, a Canada Post-mandated postal  
code change (are they allowed to do that?) and the  
addition of our new members.



## FROM THE PRESIDENT

## Notes From the Chair

Our next meeting is on St. Patrick's Day. Let's see how many members come to the meeting wearing the traditional green. After all, no matter what our origins are, our society is a gathering of people who like green. Our gardens are full of it, green that is. We appreciate flowers also, but that's a bonus. The many shapes and markings of leaves are what is with us all year long. Who has not gone through a garden, just sauntering through, or on an errand, and not touched a plant or leaf? Well that's what we are, lovers of the green, children of St. Patrick in our hearts. To put us really in the right mood, at the next meeting, our kitchen will serve "Green Tea", of course.

After that, only 3 more days and Spring starts, that is, at least on the calendar. I am sure it started right after Fall in all of our gardens. Winter was something we watched on TV, when the newscasters showed us the terrible conditions just east of the mountains. Surely in the year to come we will be punished for the good weather we had so far. For now let's enjoy every moment of it and share it with our relatives and friends in the rest of Canada - being careful not to gloat too much, envy can turn into jealousy very quickly.

We are very actively looking for a new meeting room. At our last executive meeting everyone present participated enthusiastically in the discussion. This resulted in a planned visit within the next 2 weeks to several potentially suitable halls. More news at our next meeting.

**Our Plant Sale, Saturday, April 24:** This is a very important fund raiser for our society. Please be prepared to do your part. There will be a job for every member of our club. At the FSRS there is 100% employment. This year we are planning to regulate the car traffic better, so we will have designated members directing the movement of cars and especially the parking thereof. There will be sign-up sheets at the next two meetings. Please let us know what you want to do at that event.

**Invitation to other nearby horticultural Societies:** We are expecting several visitors to our next meetings, starting this month. If encouraged by success in this venture, we will contact even more horticultural societies in our area. Please help us by making every visitor especially welcome. In turn, we are invited to participate in the activities of these clubs.

**The "B.C. Council of Garden Clubs" meeting & Plant Sale:** Saturday, March 20, 2010 - plan to attend. It is at Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church hall, 555 Slocan Street, Vancouver.

How to get there: from HWY #1, exit to Hastings west. Go past the PNE exhibition grounds (on your right). Some 2 blocks further west turn south onto Slocan. The church is on your right. The hall and parking are behind the Church (to the west). The plant sales are open as soon as you get there. To just attend the meeting is free. To partake in coffee/tea, baked goods, and a very tasty roast beef lunch, you can pre-register for \$20/person or pay \$25 at the door. There will be two very informative guest speakers and finally a plant draw. In all, this will be a very interesting meeting. Expect to meet friends and acquaintances of past times. Above all, come to be entertained and have a good time. Already several members have agreed to be there. Please join us at our table.

And now, to enjoy the rest of this newsletter, get your favorite drink and recline in a comfortable garden chair. While you are thus relaxing, keep an eye on your spouse who should be working in the garden on a nice day like this.

Happy Gardening to all, Bill.

v

*Bill Bischoff*



A spring bouquet of *R. 'Olive'*, *R. 'Coral Glow'* and *R. mucronulatum'*, all in a bud vase. See page 8.



### FROM THE EDITOR

## This Month:

Mark Turner is a career photographer located in Bellingham, Washington. He is an avid outdoorsman and gardener and has been published on the covers and inside magazines such as Garden Design, Horticulture, Sunset, Birds and Blooms and others. He has also coauthored Wildflowers of the Pacific Northwest with Phyllis Gustafson, which is now in its fourth printing.

Mark will focus his talk on the composition of garden and other photographs.

## Next Month:

Next month, Douglas Justice, whose horticultural fixation is split between the genus Rhododendron and their well-known companion plants, the Maple family, will speak to us on the UBC Botanical Garden. Covering some 44 hectares (formerly known as 110 acres) this is the oldest continuously operating university botanical garden in Canada. The designated garden areas are the Alpine, Asian, Native, Food, Physic, Winter, and Nitobe Memorial (Japanese) gardens, in addition to the newly developed Carolinian Garden, which showcases the rich diversity of the floriferous material native to the eastern hardwood forests of North America.

## The Business Stuff:

With former-President Bobby Ogdon's attendance to the February meeting, we were able to present him with the well-deserved Gerry Emerson Memorial Award:

The Gerry Emerson Memorial Award for 2009

Presented to: Bobby Ogdon

We wish to thank you for the years that you served us as  
President of our Society, and for the time that  
you would so kindly fill in a vacancy in the Executive.  
We have all been enriched by the beautiful Rhododendrons  
that you hybridized.

With our sincere appreciation, we present you the  
Gerry Emerson Memorial Award.

### OTHER DUTIES AS ASSIGNED:

☛ Ready to brandish the revivifying tea pot this month will be Karen Linton and Donna Pynch, while Mike Bale and Dalen Bayes should be practising their skills for next month's performance.

☛ Our annual Plant Sale date is rushing up on us with all the speed of germinating weed seeds, so it is time to raise your hand as a volunteer. The Plant Sale is scheduled for Saturday, April 24<sup>th</sup> between 10:00 am to 3:00 pm, and we will need cashiers in 2 and 3 hour shifts, loaders and unloaders to help with the setting up and clearing away, and general dogsbodies to circulate around and assist the buyers and answer questions if needs be.

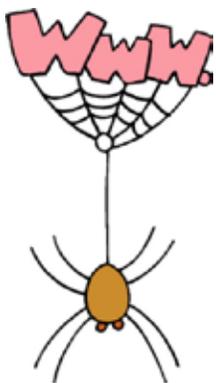
A sign-up sheet will be circulated at the next meeting.

Make an effort to participate as this function is one of our two major fund raisers of the year, and even if volunteering is not an option this year, do come out to see what new treasures you can purchase for your garden. Talk it up with your neighbours and co-workers - not only is this a way for the club to earn money, it is a great opportunity to demonstrate to prospective members how much can be learned and what swell folks we all are.

THE CALENDAR:

Wednesday, March 17	Fraser South Chapter Mark Turner, photographer - "Photo Composition"
Thursday, March 18	Vancouver Chapter Don Martyn - "Magnolias"
Monday, March 22	Fraser Valley Chapter Rosemary Pruffer - "The International Plant Propagators Society Conference in San Francisco"
Tuesday, March 23	Peace Arch Chapter Garth Wedemire - "Lu Zhu - A Plant Collector's Passion"
Thursday, April 15	Vancouver Chapter Michael Hickson, retired Head Gardener, Knightshayes Court, Devon
Wednesday, April 21	Fraser South Chapter Doug Justice - "UBC Botanical Garden"
Saturday, April 24	Fraser South Chapter Annual Plant Sale - Church Parking Lot
Wednesday, May 19	Fraser South Chapter 17 <sup>th</sup> Annual Beer Bottle Truss Show
Saturday, June 12	Fraser South Chapter Annual Picnic

☼ Check out Norma Senn's article on fragrant plants for your garden on Page 5. If there is anything more evocative of summer than the sweet, old-fashioned smell of tall, heavy-headed, sun-warmed phlox blossoms, it is hard to imagine what it might be. Also of interest are the architecturally pleasing *Nicotiana sylvestris* plants. These are of the same family as the smaller, pastel-coloured variety commonly sold as summer basket and bedding plants, and although rather coarse of leaf, their tall stature and drooping tubular flowers make them look more like a fireworks explosion than a row of plants at the back of the boarder. Profoundly fragrant, a single plant will perfume your whole garden.



[www.pnwflowers.com/](http://www.pnwflowers.com/)

A wonderful resource made possible by this month's speaker, Mark Turner, is the on-line availability of more than 8,000 photos of wildflowers of the Pacific Northwest. Starting with his extensive travels throughout Washington and Oregon in 2003 and 2004 to collect photos for "Wildflowers of the Pacific Northwest" - the book he co-authored with Phyllis Gustafson - he has continued to add to this extensive collection of attractive and definitive photographs.

You can browse by Family, Genus, Colour, or Flower Type, or use the fully indexed Search function.

This is truly a marvellous site for anyone wanting to become more familiar with our native wildflowers, as well as any one seeking to identify something that is unfamiliar .

Brenda Macdonald



## Up the Garden Path More Scent-sational Plants

The amount of scent given off by daffs varies from intense, in the case of the small flowered Jonquilla and Tazetta types, to hardly any for the larger floral types. So, if you want scented daffs, check for fragrance at time of purchase.

Hyacinths, of course, are known for their “knock em dead” fragrance. Many of us force them as pot plants but they can be bedded out. The first spring after planting, good hyacinth bulbs will produce large flower heads. If left in place and allowed to continue growing, they won’t have the great big heads of flowers after their first year, but they can go on for many years in a garden bed, and the smaller, more delicate flower stalks are charming and not so stiff. As with many bulbs, daffs and hyacinths need good drainage. As long as they receive full sun during the early spring when they are in leaf, they will continue to perform well for many years in the garden.

A word about *Fritillaria imperialis*, Crown Imperial: this is a magnificent flower, but the plants and bulbs stink! Here’s an example of something best planted at the back of the flower border.

Lily of the Valley, *Convallaria majalis*, can be something of a mixed blessing. Personally, while I like this small plant and encourage it as a ground cover in selected areas, I’ve heard others complain that it becomes invasive over time. I think it forms a nice, low herbaceous ground cover, and the stalks of very fragrant white flowers in May are wonderful. For any of the women reading this who were Brownies or Guides, you will, no doubt, remember the camp song about the Lily of the Valley “bells” ringing when the fairies sing. Because of that song, whenever I smell these sweet flowers, I

In my last article, I wrote about fragrant plants for the winter and early spring garden. That’s just the starting point, as there are many plant choices that offer scent through the late spring, summer and early fall. Since it’s the time of year when we start looking through seed catalogues and planning our summer gardens, here are some herbaceous plant choices to consider adding for fragrance.

Bulbs: At this time of the year, the spring bulbs are popping up everywhere, and for anyone wanting fragrance in the garden, two good bulb choices are Narcissus and Hyacinths. If you didn’t get around to planting them last fall, there are lots of potted bulbs available and these can be popped into the garden this spring or enjoyed as house plants. Both daffs and hyacinths can stand alone as featured plants in the spring garden, or they are good accent plants in our shrub borders. The daffodils, in particular, are wonderful for naturalizing, and in time can form large patches.



still conjure up images of the wee folk dancing around the garden, waving flower stalks of Lily of the Valley in the moonlight. Like many of the small bulbs, Lily of the Valley can be planted 'in the green' successfully, so if you want to encourage their spread, you can lift and move these easily in the early summer.

Herbaceous Perennials: Good fragrant herbaceous perennials for early summer on into the fall include German Bearded Iris, Peonies, Oriental Lilies, Perennial Phlox and some of the Salvias. All can be successfully mixed into shrub borders or grown as part of the quintessential herbaceous border. By including at least some of these



German Bearded Iris



Phlox



Peonies



Lilies

herbaceous plants, you get the double advantage of extending blooming interest throughout the growing season as well as fragrance. Lilies of all types are well-behaved companion plants for Rhodies, and even one Oriental Lily can scent an entire backyard. For fragrance and colour a bit later in the summer, many perennial Salvias and Summer Phlox are good as they come into their own in August and early September. I am especially fond of the fragrance given off by Summer phlox (*Phlox paniculata*) on warm, still nights in August.

Annuals: Lots of annuals offer fragrance, and because they continue to bloom throughout the growing season, they add colour to our gardens all summer long. Among my favourites are the sweet peas which are so useful to train up fences and trellises. The floral colours come in gorgeous shades of white, pink, red and purple. There are now a number of dwarf selections available which are useful in large containers although I personally prefer the taller, older



Sweet Peas

varieties like the Spencer types. Keep cutting the flowers to encourage bloom throughout the summer. They need full sun and even moisture for best growth.

The Nicotianas and Petunias are also fragrant, particularly the older varieties. Like Summer Phlox, these come into their own on warm, still summer evenings. Sweet Alyssum and Heliotrope are also sweetly scented, and again, it's the older varieties that are the most fragrant. Both plants are useful additions to baskets and containers, and both will lure in butterflies.



Nicotiana

Sweet Alyssum may over-winter in mild years and also has a tendency to self-sow. I've not had any success in keeping Chocolate Cosmos going beyond one year so I consider this to be an annual plant. Others have told me that it should over-winter and behave as a short-lived perennial as long as it's planted in a sunny location with good drainage. However, as far as I'm concerned, any plant that smells like chocolate is worth re-planting every year.



Heliotrope

Depending on your tastes, marigolds are either fragrant or incredibly smelly. If you're in the latter group, but like their ease of growing and bright colours, odourless varieties are available from the seed catalogues. I wouldn't want marigolds in a bouquet on my dining room table, but I do like their scent outside.

Nowadays, Stock, *Matthiola incana*, is considered an old-fashioned plant, but it is still valued for its sweet fragrance. Stock needs cool growing conditions and is easy to grow here at the coast as long as good drainage is provided. The flowers are borne in spikes and may be single or double. Colours come in shades of white, pink, red and purple. The



Stock

evening scented stock, *M. longipetala bicornis* bears small purplish flowers that open in the evening to perfume the entire garden. Here's another example of a plant that puts its energy into scent rather than showy flowers.

So, get out your seed and garden catalogues and put that order together... there are lots of "sensational" plants to grow. Next time, fragrant woody plants for the summer garden.

*Norma Senn*

# Shared Thoughts

In public it is hard not to agree with the conventional wisdom of garden design, with its emphasis on pleasing shapes, contrasting leaf colours, varied vertical and horizontal accents, and esoterica like the thickness and colour of the indumentum on the bottoms of rhododendron leaves; but in my heart of hearts, I like flowers.

And I really like them close up - really close up.

I keep thinking I should be more thrilled by a 25-foot rhododendron in full blossom than I really am. When viewed from a distance I can be quite impressed, probably because we do not see trees covered in large visible blossoms very often in our temperate forests so I feel obligated to be impressed. But the sight does not make my heart sing quite the way whacking off a big branch and bringing it inside where I can see it does.

I have never understood the attraction of a rose garden, all those angular sticks (and often painful, angular sticks) with coloured blobs on the ends seem absurd; but cut off a few of those sticks and bring them into the house where I can smell them, look at them, see each individual flower in all its subtleties and intricacies and I become quite enthused.

Moreover, I am afraid my failings as a garden designer are even more profound than that. Unable to appreciate the garden as a whole, having lusted after blossoms instead of enjoying the subtleties of texture, having resorted to pillaging the landscape for flowers I want inside where I can see them, I cannot even make proper flower arrangements. I can purchase a bunch of grocery store flowers that look perfectly nice in their paper cone, take them home, put them in a vase (well, actually a series of vases, since I never seem to be able to judge the correct size right away) and after fifteen minutes of poking and prodding I will have reduced the entire lot to an unappealing and disorganized mass of exhausted and muddy-coloured blooms.

Believe me, it is a special talent.

While visiting a friend in another city many years ago I accompanied her to an evening class in Ikebana she was taking. Desperately trying to make one or three flower stems and some suitably eccentric bits of branch coalesce into something presentable if not serene, I wound up with something that looked marginally less attractive than three limp dandelions in a jam jar. Of course within minutes the tall, elegant Japanese woman instructing in the course glided up and with a few deft adjustments produced something that was not only rock solid and in no danger of collapsing, but was visually just the other side of marvellous.

All of which is to say that I like flowers more than most plants, that I like them up close, which means that I like to cut them down and bring them into the house, and that I cannot arrange them nicely to save my soul.

And in fact there is rarely an arrangement of flowers, even attractive ones made by other competent people, which I would not like better all separated out ... although this may be a chicken and egg thing. Hard to know whether I cannot arrange flowers because I like to look at them all separately, or I like to look at them all separately because I cannot arrange flowers.

Be that as it may, the answer, my fellow flower-worshippers, is bud vases.

Ikea and I have become deeply involved over these past 15 years, and I now have a corner on the world's supply of bud vases. I have tall ones, I have squat ones, I have tiny ones; but they all take just one flower, or one truss, or maybe two very skinny stems.

It makes everything so simple. I simply wander about the garden (when the garden architect isn't looking) laying waste to the shrubberies at will. I bring all the bits back into the house, plunk them into 15 different bud vases and then spend happy hours examining each flower individually and shuffling the bud vases around into a pleasing and cohesive pattern. Somehow I can arrange an entire group of vases so they look good, I just cannot do it with the same number of flowers in a single vase.

Which is all to say that this has been a marvellous spring for bud vases. Everything is blossoming early, and everything is blossoming well. My bud vases never looked so pretty. Life is good.

*Brenda Macdonald*

# What's in Bloom ...



## ***R. calophytum***

You may remember Bill Bischoff's luscious photos of calophytum last year, in full bloom on April 7<sup>th</sup> when our garden was still trying to thaw out. Well this year at least we managed to have ours bloom in the same calendar month, although the Bischoffs' was still more advanced than ours. What is really interesting however, is the fact that although both of them are clearly *R. calophytum*, that ridiculous discoid stigma is lime green on the Bischoffs' bush, and quite pink on ours. Bill also commented that when they purchased their plant they were advised to count on one year for every inch of leaf length before they could expect any blossoms. Now that seems like a handy rule of thumb .. has anyone ever investigated its legitimacy? photos: left, Bill Bischoff, Surrey, earlier than on the right, Sean Rafferty, North Vancouver/ 02 MAR 2010



## ***R. x strigillosum* (open pollinated)**

This beauty was a lucky purchase from Finley's Farm a few years ago, that has only now really come into its own. The blossoms are large and positively electric pink, and they show up very well against the long, dark strigillosum-like leaves. The deep wine-red nectar pouches add to the impact. North Vancouver/ 02 MAR 2010



## ***R. pachytrichum* and *R. 'April Rose'***

Two more spring beauties, the species *pachytrichum* on the left and a slightly blue-tinted (it was still too cold?) example of a sterile double (the stamens have turned into petals, giving it that wedding pom-pom look) hybrid, "April Rose". North Vancouver/ 02 MAR 2010

## Rhododendron of the Year Awards

A new feature on the ARS District 1 Website: [www.rhodos.ca](http://www.rhodos.ca) is a page which summarizes the “Rhododendron of the Year Awards” for the Pacific Northwest and Southwestern British Columbia (ARS District 1) for the years 2002 to 2010.

Rhododendron of the Year Awards are made in four categories for each of eight geographical regions of the United States and Canada. These include elepidote rhododendrons, lepidote rhododendrons, deciduous azaleas and evergreen azaleas. Twenty-nine plants have been selected for the year 2010. See the following webpage for more information:

<http://www.rhododendron.org/royawardsintro6.htm>



Plants selected for the 2010 Rhododendron of the Year Awards were drawn from the American Rhododendron Society’s “Proven Performers” lists. These lists are developed and updated each year by the local ARS chapters and are made up of plants that do very well in members’ own gardens over many years.

The purpose of the ROY awards is to educate the public about the wide range of rhododendrons that can be grown successfully in people’s gardens. To be selected for a ROY award a plant must:

- have excellent foliage and flowers
- have an attractive growth habit
- prove itself hardy for the specific region
- be pest and disease resistant

Plants selected for the “Northwest Region” (our region) for 2010 are:



- ‘Seaview Sunset’ (elepidote) - a Frank Fujioka cross of ‘Nancy Evans’ and ‘Canadian Sunset’
- ‘Too Bee’ (lepidote) – a Warren Berg cross of ‘Patricia’ and R. keiskei ‘Yaku Fairy’
- ‘Gibraltar’ (deciduous azalea) – a selection by Edmund de Rothschild
- ‘Rosebud’ (evergreen azalea) – a Joe Gable cross of ‘Louise Gable’ and ‘Caroline Gable’

See the webpage: <http://rhodos.ca/ROTY/roty.html> for Rhododendron of the Year Awards for the Pacific Northwest and Southwestern British Columbia (ARS District 1) for the years 2002 to 2010.

---

*This note was provided by Garth Wedemire, an FSRS member and also Webmaster for [www.rhodos.ca](http://www.rhodos.ca). This website is an invaluable resource for all Chapters of ARS District 1 (British Columbia, Canada) and their members:*

---