

# The Oak

Newsletter of  
the Fraser South  
Rhododendron  
Society

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

## This Month's Meeting

Date: Wednesday, May 19, 2010

### THE 17TH ANNUAL FRASER SOUTH RHODODENDRON SOCIETY JUSTLY FAMOUS BEER BOTTLE TRUSS SHOW



## 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
Librarian:	Joan McGiveron	604-538-9347
Website:	Chris Klapwijk	604-581-0925



## FROM THE PRESIDENT

## Notes From the Chair

Thank you very much, everyone who helped with our plant sale: those members involved with the planning of this so important yearly event and also those who stayed for the whole five hours of mostly rain. Being relatively new at our society, I am always amazed on how well everything functions. The whole affair was more of a joyous get together than just a plant sale. Needless to say, our plant sale was an unexpected success.

What did we do different than in past years? Well, we did everything as before, just more of it. From the start, we had a meeting at the parking lot with our host, Mr. Francis Switzer, the treasurer of the Church to lay out the sales and parking areas. We wanted to keep the two sides well separated, for practical and safety reasons. That worked very well. The vendors kept their vehicles at the sales side for better access to their sales plants. The cashiers were also the gate out of the sales area. Several buggies were available to move larger plants to the parking lot. The cashiers had a cover to keep them and the money dry. Our host provided a food stand, where coffee refills could be had at 50 cents, an important arrangement to help keeping us warm.

Several members were very active to have our event listed with the news media. We also canvassed other horticultural associations. We visited these organizations at their meetings and handed out invitations to our plant sale. We were very well received by all, in fact the Langley Garden Club had their plant sale at the same day we had ours, so we came to a special arrangement. They would hand out our invitations to our sale at their cashier, as the visitors left and we did the same at our cashier. They too reported a higher than usual sale.

The next exciting event will be our truss show, this coming Wednesday, May 19th.

Everyone is encouraged to bring from their garden the best trusses available. Also everyone, don't forget your cameras. This is also the time to bring a friend or neighbor to this so colorful meeting. The prizes have been ordered; in fact several more prizes than needed will be available so that even the recipients of the last prizes will have the fun or agony of choosing.

One more event. Our society will be hosting an information table on Saturday & Sunday, May 22 and 23 at Art's Nursery in Port Kells. We will be there from about 10:00 am to 3:00 pm on both days. Our aim is to garner new members by helping Art's Nursery's customers with their Rhododendron questions. Several members have already pledged assistance, but everyone is welcome to help. Just bring whatever you think is needed to convince customers that the FSRS is a worthwhile organization to be part of. My personal initiative will be to interest potential new members in Rhododendron species. Please come for the whole day or just part of it. Perhaps you can come for both days. One more point, there is no restaurant nearby, so bring something to eat if needed. Coffee will be available.

Talking about new members to the American Rhododendron Society. The FSRS has registered 9 new members with ARS within the last 3 months. That is more than any other Rhododendron society within North America, as reported in the latest Bulletin of ARS. I hope that all members who were not members of ARS before enjoy the ARS bulletin now. It is one of the best and most informative horticultural bulletins published. You might notice that several of our members have in the past and are still now contributing to this publication. Yes we are an active part of ARS and proud of it.

For next month, please start now to get your contributions ready for the auction at our picnic. This too is a fun event and an important fund raiser for our society. More on this at our next meeting  
Happy growing to all and I hope to see you at the truss show.

*Bill Bischoff*

## Queries

*Periodically we receive queries from members of the public regarding things-Rhododendron. They will be published here in the hopes that both the questions and the answers provided by one of our Chapter members will provide additional information for other interested readers.*

Hello Bill,

I was in Vancouver two weeks ago, and made a one-week trip to Washington and Oregon. In WA (Gig Harbour) I visited a nursery (Peninsula Nursery) where I bought a lovely rhododendron for my host, cultivar "Unique". It was inexpensive, and hardy down to about -15°F, as I recall.

I live in Ottawa, and am thinking that I would really like to try one of these here. It may survive our winter if well protected. I called some nurseries in Connecticut and Massachusetts, where I will be in June, but they have

not heard of it. So I looked on the Web, in the hope of perhaps getting one shipped east from Oregon or Washington.

I learned two things - they may be susceptible to phytophthora fungus and there are restrictions on shipping rhododendrons unless certified disease-free (and the disease may affect oaks), and secondly, that they may exist in Langley.

If that is the case, perhaps it might be possible to ship one from BC to Ottawa. So my question to you is - do you know if this cultivar is available, disease-free, in BC, and if so, whether it is possible to ship one east? Many thanks for your time.

Sincerely,  
Malcolm Z.

.....  
Hi Malcolm,

Bill Bischoff, our chapter President, forwarded your email concerning R. "Unique" to our executive members. I don't know if anyone has responded to you yet, but here is my two cents worth.

You are able to import rhododendrons from the U.S. if the vendor provides a phytosanitary certificate (phyto) certifying the plant material is phytophthora and pest free. Some U.S. nurseries will ship (with the phyto) to Canada. You may also bring the plant across the border yourself if you obtain a phyto from the vendor and produce it for Border Services if required.

However, shipping rhododendrons within Canada does not require a phyto.

Rhododendron "Unique" is indeed available in Langley and in almost all nurseries in the Vancouver area, but it will take me a while to find one that will also ship to eastern Canada. It is actually so ubiquitous out here that it is hard for many gardeners to generate enthusiasm for it - it seems to be part of every gas station and big box store landscape around.

I believe there are probably rhododendrons, (although I am unsure whether 'Unique' is one of them) that will tolerate the Ottawa cold (the snow cover should help), but I would think that finding plants that will tolerate your summer heat, humidity, and very warm night-time temperatures may be the real problem.

There are some "ironclad" rhododendrons such as "Scintillation (-26C), catawbiense (-31C), and their hybrids that do well in eastern North America. They are hardier than 'Unique' and may serve you better in both your winter and summer climates. Also, the University of Minnesota has produced the 'Northern Lights' series, a group of deciduous azaleas that are quite lovely and are specifically bred for areas with harsh winters.

For a more informative overview of what may grow best in your area, I would direct you to the web sites of the three Rhododendron Societies below. I am sure that if you contact them, you will find a wealth of information about which rhododendrons are compatible with conditions in the Ottawa area. In the meantime, I shall make enquiries of nurseries that may ship to our nation's Capital.

Toronto Region Rhododendron and Horticultural Society  
Niagra Region Rhododendron Society  
Atlantic Rhododendron and Horticultural Society

[www.onrhodos.com/TRRHSD/Home.html](http://www.onrhodos.com/TRRHSD/Home.html)  
[www.rhodoniagara.org/](http://www.rhodoniagara.org/)  
[www.atlanticrhodo.org/](http://www.atlanticrhodo.org/)

Cheers,  
Sean



## Quick Hits

A very warm welcome to our newest members, who took advantage of the opportunity to join us for the next year while browsing for some great horticultural specimens at our April Plant Sale :

Evelyn Jensen, of Langley, Full Member

Barbara Inniss, of Abbotsford, Full Member

Margaret and Chris Hodgson, of Surrey, Associate Members - PARS

Welcome to Fraser South! We are so pleased to have you with us.



And conversely, a very fond farewell to Dixie Mueller, who is leaving us for the salubrious surroundings of the Cowichan Valley. Dixie has served both as our friendly one-person Welcome committee for new members and lately as our Librarian. That was in addition to her primary role as stalwart supporter of the Chapter and warm friend to all at Fraser South. We will miss her dearly, and hope that she will take all available opportunities to visit if she is ever back on this side of the Strait of Georgia.



## FROM THE EDITOR

## This Month:

The Justifiably Famous Beer Bottle Truss Show, Edition 17. I warned you last month that you needed to sharpen up your secateurs and practise stretching in order to reach that best-in-show straight-stemmed truss at the very top of the plant, so we expect a little something from everyone. Interestingly enough, the somewhat disappointingly cold and dull weather we have been enduring lately (so unfair after that wonderfully short and mild winter!) has occasioned unexpected benefits in the garden - the blossoms on everything just seem to last and last, particularly the rhodos. So there is no excuse, everyone should have something in bloom. Bring it along so we can all admire it. You may remember the rules from last time:

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 the hail and cold rain have not ruined, 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 your 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 6 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 - no need for voting reform, them as has (the most beads), gets (the prize).

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.

Winners in the various categories are announced and plant prizes are awarded to all.

There is only one adjudicated prize, the Lionheart Award for the best yellow, any Class. This award was inaugurated in 2007 to honour the memory of Margaret "Mike" Trembath, a founding member of FSRS, a committed rhodophile, and an accomplished hybridizer. She named one of her registered hybrids *R. 'Lionheart'*.

'Lionheart' has a warm butter-yellow blossom with a substantial calyx that develops from a brick-red bud. It blossoms late in the rhodo-year, usually from early to mid-June. Although not commercially viable (apparently the gardening public is not looking to purchase rhodos in mid-June) it is an attractive plant, and, as Mike put it:

*"It makes me happy to look at it - maybe because of the lateness of the bloom, or perhaps because of its rich, warm colours, or the layered look its rather flat-topped trusses give it when in bloom - it is a smiling plant."*

The prize awarded for this category is a coffee mug with a photo of 'Lionheart' printed on it - something hopefully considered attractive but at the same time something useful, something of purpose. We thought Mike would approve.



## Next Month:

Our end of year Picnic and Auction, Saturday, June 12<sup>th</sup> at the home of Karen Linton and Larry Morton. We will expect you, your culinary contribution, and your auction items anytime after 2:00 pm. Address in the Membership List attached, more information next month.

## The Business Stuff:

Hopefully we will be able to collect a number of completed Proven Performers sheets at the next meeting. Remember, nothing esoteric or even remotely scientific or botanical is required - just a few of your favourite rhodos/azaleas, and why you like them.

### OTHER DUTIES AS ASSIGNED:

☛ The distaff side of the Old Boys Duo that performed last month is on duty this month. Lori Bayes and Patti Bale will have control of the samovars and the donation bowl. At the end of the evening, the FSRS box should be handed over to either Nancy Moore or Mary Ann Berg in preparation for the resumption of service next September.

### THE CALENDAR:

<b>Sunday, May 16</b>	<b>Peace Arch Chapter-sponsored bus tour to the Bales' garden "Lu Zhu", in Agassiz, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm Contact: Chris Hodgson, PARS, 604-541-2382</b>
<b>Wednesday, May 19</b>	<b>Fraser South Chapter 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Beer Bottle Truss Show</b>
<b>Thursday, May 20</b>	<b>Vancouver Chapter A walk in the UBC Botanic Garden</b>
<b>Saturday, May 22</b>	<b>10th Annual George Fraser Day, all day and evening Ucluelet, on Vancouver Island</b>
<b>Tuesday, May 25</b>	<b>Peace Arch Chapter TBA</b>
<b>Monday, May 31</b>	<b>Fraser Valley Chapter Garth Wedemire - Garden Tours , Everett Convention, 2009</b>
<b>Saturday, June 12</b>	<b>Fraser South Chapter Annual Picnic and Auction</b>

*Brenda Macdonald*



Two more views of Mike Trembath's hybrid 'Lionheart'.  
All photos by Mike Trembath.



## Seventeenth 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 19<sup>th</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 the counting beads used for the last few years. 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. )

#### **Judged**

Lionheart Award: best over-all yellow, any Class

#### **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'