

# The Oak

Newsletter of  
the Fraser South  
Rhododendron  
Society

Volume 25 Number 4  
April 2011



[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 Months Meeting

Date: Wednesday, April 20, 2011  
Topic: "A Discovery of Trees -  
South Africa 2010"  
Speaker: Sue Grant & Garth Wedemire  
Plants: Harold Fearing

## 2011 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 |
|             | Matt Groves      | 604-856-2624 |
|             | Kathy Delory     | 604-576-1172 |
| Programme:  | Sean Rafferty    | 604-990-5353 |
| Membership: | Mai Swan         | 604-852-1992 |
| Newsletter: | Brenda Macdonald | 604-990-5353 |
| Librarian:  | Joan McGiveron   | 604-538-9347 |
| Website:    | Chris Klapwijk   | 604-581-0925 |

## Quick Hits

- ☉ At the end of this month's newsletter is an easily detachable FSRS Plan Sale poster. Please print it up and show it to friends, neighbours, and passing strangers whom you think might be interested in some great plants at some very attractive prices.
- ☉ Don't forget to start saving useful garden items for our annual picnic in June, and also remember to suss out your rhodo bushes for likely entries into next month's annual Beer Bottle Truss Show

## Notes From the Chair



### FROM THE PRESIDENT

As I write this, the plant sale of the Peace Arch Rhododendron Society is in full swing. I wish them much success on this somewhat cool day. This event is also a reminder that our plant sale is only two weeks away, on Saturday, April 23 at the Langley United Church, 5673 – 200<sup>th</sup> Street, in the parking lot. We invite all our members to be volunteers on that day. This is a joint event between the United Church and our society, where the United Church sells annual and perennial bedding plants as well plants in baskets. The United Church also sells food and drink. We have the same vendors as last year plus one new seller who offers an interesting variety of not so common plants. In all it promises to be again an exciting event. We ask all volunteers to please park in the parking lot *adjacent* to the church parking lot, that is, to the west of the church lot, to provide easy access and space for our customers. There is only space for vendors in the parking area in front and on the north side of the church. Not to forget, please bring some spring flowers and especially Rhododendron trusses for our display table at the sale. During the past several weeks we have canvassed several horticultural clubs and other institutions to invite their members to visit our sale. Thanks to all that helped with this chore. Next week we will contact two more of these societies with our invitations. These organizations have been asked to provide us with invitation literatures for their up-coming events, which we will hand out at our cashier stand. This worked well last year and we hope that we will have the same good success again.

Several members of our society have made plans to be part of the ARS meetings in Portland on May 11 to 15. There is still time to be part of this so very promising event.

Our planned two-day bus trip to Vancouver Island had to be postponed until next year. The time given for this project was just too short to get commitments from gardens to be visited.

There is however an interesting alternative event available for Sunday, May 22. The Nanaimo Rhododendron Society's Nine Garden tour. This is a fund-raising event for the 2012 ARS Conference in Nanaimo. Everyone is invited to make their own travel arrangements. More details are provided in this newsletter. This could easily be a two day event if one decides to view the gardens in leisure and stay over night in Nanaimo.

On Saturday, March 26<sup>th</sup> Les Clay gave a rhododendron presentation at the West Coast Garden Centre in South Surrey. He reports a good success with some 50 persons attending. This was an excellent opportunity to hand out membership invitations for our society, as well to our plant sale; thank you Les.

Our picnic has now been booked for Saturday, June 11th at the home of Karen Linton and Larry Morton, our long-standing and ever so gracious hosts of several past picnics. All participants are invited to bring food and drink as well friends, and above all big smiles. As always our auction needs all the donations we can get, please be generous. Remember this is one of the main events at our picnic, a source of income and above all a source of fun.

Last Wednesday, April 6<sup>th</sup>, The FSRs executive board were invited to hold their monthly meeting at the home of Lori and Dalen Bayes in Sumas, WA. Most Executive members decided to come well before the meeting, to be able to visit one of the most stunningly beautiful forest gardens in our area. Thank you very much Lori and Dalen. Many rhododendrons were in bloom, as were many companion plants. Whenever this garden is open to our members again, make sure not to miss this opportunity.

I look forward to see all of you at our next membership meeting. Until then, happy gardening!

*Bill Bischoff*



**Nanaimo Rhododendron Society presents  
A Self Guided Tour of Nine Nanaimo Gardens**

**Sunday, May 22nd, 2011  
10am to 4pm**

**Tickets \$15**



For more info see our website at [Nanaimo.rhodos.ca](http://Nanaimo.rhodos.ca)



## FROM THE EDITOR

### Last Month:

Last month Steve Hootman caught us up on his latest plant hunting expeditions in China and Vietnam. As usual Steve's images were spectacular and his commentary was amusing, insightful, and above all, informative. It is always such a pleasure to hear him speak, and we forgive his computer its trespasses, even if he does not.

### Next Month:

Next month is our annual (and justifiably famous) Beer Bottle Truss Show. Sharpen up your secateurs and find somebody to hold the step ladder so you can reach up and get that straight-stemmed beauty at the top of the bush -

that is, if anything is actually in bloom. This year it looks like we will be having an "early show" show, even though it is being held in May rather than April. Keep your eye on likely prospects - if the weather continues this unseasonably cool, you may have to provide a little encouragement by bringing some of the trusses into the relative warmth of your house a few days early, so they can get a chance to warm up and open fully for the big event.

### The Business Stuff:

- We regret that the proposed bus tour to Vancouver Island being organized by Chris Klapwijk has had to be cancelled. Hopefully we will be able to get an earlier start on the organization of a similar tour next year.
- A final reminder has been received from the ARS 65<sup>th</sup> annual Spring Convention. There is still an opportunity to register and attend what promises to be an informative and enjoyable session. See more info on their website at [www.ars2011convention.com/](http://www.ars2011convention.com/), or call them at 800-548-0111.
- And from our fellow Fraser Valley brethren comes the following notice:

The Fraser Valley Rhododendron Society is holding a special event on Saturday, 28<sup>th</sup> May, 2011, from 1:00pm until 4.00pm at the Rhododendron Garden at Whonnock Lake.

There are two main features; a species recognition workshop and a general appreciation and naming of the flowers on view at the time.

The workshop will not be highly technical, but it will allow participants to examine closely several of the species rhododendrons in the garden, and attempt to identify them from leaf and flower characteristics. The species all belong to the Fortunea subsection known for having large and often fragrant flowers. Several reference sheets will be supplied.

We will have photo handouts of flowers in bloom throughout the garden and we invite everyone to join a contest to name the flowers. Looking at labels will not be considered cheating.

Members of FVRS will be on hand to welcome newcomers to the garden.

Please register your intention to attend, and say if you wish to take the workshop. A small donation to the Society on the day would be appreciated.

To reach the garden, take 272 Street north from Lougheed Highway or south from Dewdney Trunk Road then east on 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue and first left following the signs.

Please contact Scot Henney by telephone at 604-464-7979 or by email at [scoth@shaw.ca](mailto:scoth@shaw.ca) to register

### OTHER DUTIES AS ASSIGNED: .

- April may bring showers, and certainly this year it is bringing cold showers, but it also brings us the cheery warmth of Gael Dodd and Ginny Fearing at the tea table. Thank you to them, and also to all the anonymous and therefore unsung contributors who make our after meeting social time such a splendiferous feast.
- Due to what might be construed as sheer incompetence, but could also just be plain forgetfulness, the sign-up sheet for the Plant Sale did not arrive at last month's meeting - which means this month is your one and only chance to lend some support to one of our two big fund-raising endeavours. Look for the clip board this meeting and be sure to sign up, even if only for a couple of hours.

THE CALENDAR:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Sunday, April 17</b>                    | <b>Orchid tour at the home of Carla and Bill Bischoff, anytime after 1:00pm, for members of the Orchid Society. All members of the FSRS are invited as well.</b> |
| <b>Tuesday, April 19</b>                   | <b>PARS bus tour to UBC Botanical Garden 9:00 - 3:00 contact Chris Hodgson at 604-541-2382</b>   |
| <b>Wednesday, April 20</b>                 | <b>Fraser South Chapter<br/>Sue &amp; Garth Wedemire - "Plants of South Africa, 2010"</b>  |
| <b>Thursday, April 21</b>                  | <b>Vancouver Chapter<br/>Malcolm Pharoh - "Marwood Hill Gardens"</b>   |
| <b>Saturday, April 23</b>                  | <b>Fraser South Chapter<br/>Annual Plant Sale - United Church 200<sup>th</sup> St. at 56<sup>th</sup> Ave.</b>   |
| <b>Monday, April 25</b>                    | <b>Fraser Valley Chapter<br/>Gwen Odermatt - "Great Plant Picks"</b>   |
| <b>Tuesday, April 26</b>                   | <b>Peace Arch Chapter<br/>Douglas Justice - "UBC Garden Rhododendron Species"</b>  |
| <b>Sunday, May 8</b>                       | <b>Open Garden - "Wingswept Garden" in Langley home of Gael and John Dodd, 11:00am to 5:00pm</b>   |
| <b>Wednesday, May 10 to Sunday, May 15</b> | <b>65<sup>th</sup> Annual ARS Spring Convention<br/>Vancouver, Washington</b>  |
| <b>Wednesday, May 18</b>                   | <b>Fraser South Chapter<br/>Annual Beer Bottle Truss Show</b>  |
| <b>Sunday, May 22</b>                      | <b>Nanaimo Chapter<br/>Self Guided Tour of Nine Nanaimo Gardens,<br/>see info at <a href="http://www.nanaimo.rhodos.ca">www.nanaimo.rhodos.ca</a></b>            |
| <b>Saturday, May 28</b>                    | <b>Garden tour at the home of Bill and Carla Bischoff, starting at 11:00am, for members of PARS. All members of the FSRS are invited as well.</b>                |
| <b>Saturday, June 11</b>                   | <b>Fraser South Chapter<br/>Annual Picnic and Auction<br/>at the home of Karen Linton and Larry Morton</b>   |

✿ And finally, on the next page is information about a book launch for Roy Forster, former Curator at Van Dusen Botanical Garden. Although well aware of Roy's immense breadth of horticultural knowledge and his profound interest and generosity in sharing this knowledge, I must admit I was absolutely ignorant and completely charmed by the quality of the art work he has done to accompany his text. Unfortunately the notification arrived too late to ensure attendance at the event itself, but I am sure the book will continue to be available at the Van Dusen Garden Shop.

*Brenda Macdonald*

## For the Love of Trees - An Arboreal Odyssey

... by Richard Roy Forster ... written and illustrated by the author

### Synopsis.

This is a work of 103 pages incorporating a descriptive text with 54 oil paintings and watercolours by the author.

The author is a botanist/horticulturist and for 24 years was responsible for the planting and development of the VanDusen Botanical Garden in Vancouver, British Columbia. His avocation has been landscape painting. Trained at the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, he holds a degree in art history and methods from McMaster University. His contributions to Canadian Horticulture are recognized with the Order of Canada, and the Queen's Jubilee medal.

The book deals with the importance of trees to the planet and thus to all life on earth. In non-technical language, the author describes the

symbolism and ancient connections with folklore, art and industry throughout history.

The paintings represent several decades of journeys in many lands, picturing the rarity, unique habitats and ancient origin of the species such as the 4,700 year-old pines of the California White



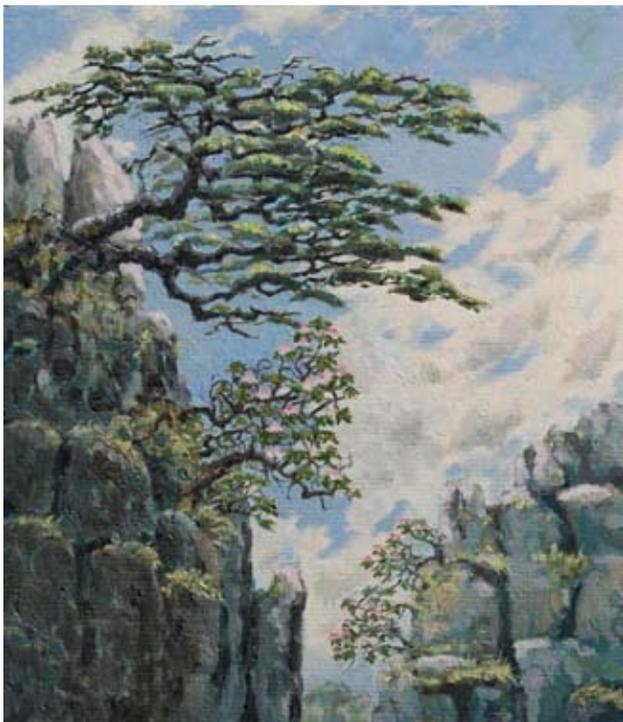
*Daboecia azorica* on island of Fayal, Azores

Mountains, or the fabled dragon tree of the Canary Islands. The author travelled to the countries of Europe, the Mediterranean, North Africa, North America, Oceanic Islands and China. It is these journeys that form the odyssey in search of these iconic trees.

The trees of Canada figure prominently in the text and illustrations. The paintings are a personal interpretation of the subjects not to be found easily in photographs, and show the deep attachment the author forged with trees and other plant life during his entire career.

Published by the VanDusen Botanical Garden Association, April 7 2011

Book launch on **April 12, 2011, from 4:30 to 6:00 PM**, in the Floral Hall ... everyone welcome ... no obligation to buy ... All proceeds in support of the garden



*Rhododendron wiltonii* and *Tsuga dumosa*

# *R. dauricum*

One of the two members of subsection Rhodorastra, *R. dauricum* is the darling of the winter-weary rhododendron lover, with some varieties blossoming as early as December or January. This in itself should not be sufficient to receive much attention, as there seem to be no end of species that can be fooled by mild winter weather into putting out their blooms early, only to have both blooms and buds turned to brown mush by a cold break. It is to *dauricum*'s great credit that such late frosts seem to have no effect on the blossoms at all - they simply wait out the cold, and continue on when the temperature warms up again. This characteristic, along with its slightly thicker leaves and semi-evergreen habit are what chiefly differentiate it from the other member of Rhodorastra, *R. mucronulatum*.

Usually found in the pale to deep rosy-purple colour range, *dauricum* can also be found in a deeper purple, and sometimes pink or white. Its widely funnel-shaped blossoms are usually about 2 - 5 cm across, with a prominent style, and arranged in terminal or sometimes axillary inflorescences of 1 to 3.

Despite its wide variability in colour, habit, and the amount of winter leaf retention, *dauricum* can often be identified by its densely lepidote lower leaf surfaces. The scales are initially translucent, then turn brown, and are often so numerous they overlap.

*Dauricum*, like its cousin *mucronulatum*, has been used in a wide variety of crosses, as hybridizers strove to impart its cold-hardiness and floriferous nature to other species with other colours and habits.

Many of these crosses have become staples in our gardens, for what would the early spring garden be without 'Olive' displaying its subdued but oh-so-welcome mauvey-pink, tissue paper puffs along its almost bare arms.

*Brenda Macdonald*



Engraving by Weddell, 1817  
Curtis's Botanical Magazine

It is hard to know whether it is the extreme age of the engraving, or artistic licence that has resulted in the colour of the blossoms in the engraving to the left being far more red than is usually seen within this species. The photo at right captures a more typical colour for *R. dauricum*.

|                           |   |          |    |
|---------------------------|---|----------|----|
| Species and their Hybrids |   | pollen ♂ |    |
|                           |   | B        | b  |
| pistil ♀                  | B | BB       | Bb |
|                           | b | Bb       | bb |





top left      *R. dauricum*, a pink form

middle left      *R. 'Ernie Dee'* keeps almost all of its leaves during the winter, and has a small, tight, mounding habit  
*R. dauricum* x *R. racemosum*,  
1968, Caperci

below left      *R. 'April Dawn'*  
*R. minus Carolinianum* Group x *R. dauricum*,  
1972, Mehlquist

top right      *R 'Olive'*  
*R. moupinense* x *R. dauricum*,  
1936, Stirling-Maxwell



We now come to a grab-bag of mystery plants. During the 1970's both Messrs Mezitt and Mehlquist were busy creating a number of hybrids using either or both of *dauricum* and *mucronulatum*. And it was during that same period of time that the hybrids pictured here were developed. Unfortunately, however, the exact crosses (and in the case of 'April Mist', even the person who did the cross) are unknown. They all bear a certain resemblance and are all sterile hybrids, as they are missing their anthers.

'April Mist', upper left, is unregistered, with neither hybridizer nor parents documented, but it has a lovely ghostly mauve colour and a perky little truss that make it look like a miniature wedding pom-pom.

'April White', upper right, registered 1972 - Mehlquist, with unknown parentage, is virtually indistinguishable from 'April Snow', registered 1978 - Mezitt, with similarly mysterious antecedents.

'Emasculatum', middle left, is not only the only hybrid whose lost anthers have not been converted to an extra whorl of petals, it is the only one whose provenance is known: *R. ciliatum* x *R. dauricum*, 1927 - Waterer. Note that the style is as prominent here as in the other hybrids.

'April Rose', lower left, was registered 1972 - Mehlquist, but again the parentage is not documented. It has the same tight ball as April Mist, but its darker colour and more angular petals give it quite a different look.

*Brenda Macdonald*

All photos harvested from the wonderful  
"Hirsutum" site  
[www.hirsutum.info/index.html](http://www.hirsutum.info/index.html)



Fraser South Rhododendron Society

# Annual Plant Sale and Flower Show

Saturday, April 23, 2011  
United Church Hall  
5673 200<sup>th</sup> Street  
Langley, BC

10:00am to 3:00  
(rain or shine)

Plants for sale include

- rhododendrons and azaleas
- maples and other specimen trees
- companion plants

Plants are locally grown

Growers will be available to help you  
choose the right plant for your garden  
conditions

Growers and club members will be  
on hand to answer your gardening  
questions

Sponsored by the Fraser South  
Rhododendron Society

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604-589-6134 or 604-857-0440

