

# The Oak

Newsletter of  
the Fraser South  
Rhododendron  
Society

Volume 25 Number 9  
November 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 Month's Meeting

Date: Wednesday, November 16, 2011  
Topic: Bill Bischoff  
Speaker: Tufa in the Garden  
Plant Sales: Bill Bischoff

## 2011 Officers

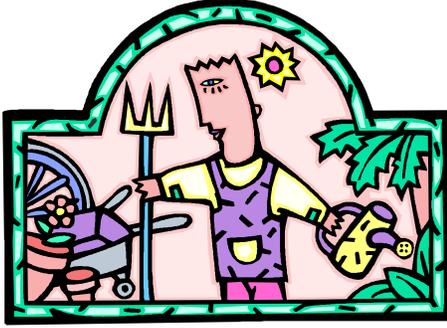
President:	Bill Bischoff	604-589-6134
Past Pres:	Harold Fearing	604-857-4136
Vice Pres:	John Dodd	604-530-0153
Secretary:		
Treasurer:	(Harold Fearing)	604-857-4136
Directors:	Arlene Darby	604-597-1849
	Matt Groves	604-856-2624
	Kathy Delory	604-576-1172
Programme:	Sean Rafferty	604-990-5353
Membership:	(Ginny Fearing)	604-857-4136
Newsletter:	Brenda Macdonald	604-990-5353
Librarian:	Joan McGiveron	604-538-9347
Website:	Chris Klapwijk	604-581-0925

## Quick Hits



A very warm red carpet welcome to our newest members, Don Giacomazzi, and Rosemary and Art Prufer. Don, who lives in Aldergrove, attended as a guest for the first time last spring, and has now decided to make it official. Welcome, Don!

Rosemary and Art are long-time members of the Fraser Valley Chapter who have decided to make Fraser South their new home. We welcome them both, and look forward to benefiting from their extensive knowledge and enthusiasm.



**FROM THE PRESIDENT**

## Notes From the Chair

Hi everyone in Rhodo-Land!

Aren't we especially blessed to live in the very heart of western Canada where rhododendrons flourish without any great effort? We should never forget this. Case in point: our next-door neighbour who never ever waters his rhododendrons - or even the rest of the garden, which came with the house when he moved in several years ago. Nevertheless he has good looking plant specimens and an abundance of flowers every year. Rhododendrons are for everyone and it is our special duty to get everyone interested in their

cultivation. Invite people to our meetings, especially if you think a guest speaker is of interest. Invite friends to our special functions, Christmas party, picnic and plant sale; not to forget our Truss Show. All these events are available for all to enjoy through the efforts and hard work of our respective committee members.

Indeed if you have enjoyed our meetings and programs throughout the years, now is the time for you to see what you can do to help and become part of our executive group. Now is the time when your society needs your participation. Harold Fearing, a prominent member of our club who has held several offices in our society, will be canvassing our members during the next few weeks to assemble a roster of candidates that will be voted on during our coming January, 2012, meeting. Don't miss your chance to be part of this group. If you cannot come to all the executive meetings, no problem, we will correspond with you via e-mail, in color if needed.

Our society is a member of the "BC Council of Garden Clubs" which has some 180 garden clubs as members throughout BC, not counting the individual members. As a member of our organization, you are welcome to be part of their twice yearly meetings. Some 100 persons, as representatives of clubs or as individual visitors, participate in these meetings every year. There are very interesting guest speakers, there are plant sellers and of course there is food available, the latter at a modest cost. These events are very entertaining and could be classed as a great indoor garden party. There is no entry fee. This organization also publishes a list of garden-club events which is available to you, as a member of our club. We will remind you before the next meeting in March of 2012.

In closing, may I remind you that the birds you feed throughout winter will keep you garden bug free all summer.

Happy gardening to all,

*Bill Bischoff*

**THE CALENDAR:**

<b>Wednesday, Nov 16</b>	<b>Fraser South Chapter Bill Bischoff - Tufa in the Garden</b>
<b>Thursday, Nov 17</b>	<b>Vancouver Chapter Andy Hill - Collecting for UBC in China</b>
<b>Wednesday, Dec 14</b>	<b>Fraser South Chapter Annual Christmas Potluck - early start @ 6:30</b>



## FROM THE EDITOR

### Last Month:

Last month Steve Hootman allowed us to accompany him on a virtual tour of his plant explorations in the Asian continent. Steve's presentations are always informative, inspiring, funny, and visually entrancing, his periodic struggles with the technology notwithstanding. We send our thanks out to him for his continued support of our chapter meetings.

### This Month:

This month our own Bill Bischoff will give a presentation on the use of "tufa" in the garden. As many of you already know, tufa (the original on which the more ubiquitous and completely man-made 'hyper-tufa' is based)

is a natural form of limestone. What makes tufa different from the many other forms of limestone most often used in industrial and construction operations is that it is usually formed in relation to fresh water rather than salt water processes. In addition, the presence of macro-organisms rather than micro-organisms during its formation usually results in a very porous and somewhat soft structure. It is this very softness and porosity that make it an ideal medium for use in horticulture. In any event, come and hear Bill tell us about the many ways that tufa can be used in the garden. He is sure to have some useful tips, particularly for those whose landscape is not extensive, and who need some good ideas for small gardens, patios and balconies.

### Next Month:

Next month is of course our annual Christmas Potluck Dinner and Soiree. Full rules and regs will be outlined in next month's newsletter, but keep in mind that we do have an early date - December 14<sup>th</sup> instead of December 21<sup>st</sup>, and an early start - 6:30 pm instead of 7:30 pm. Karen Linton, our Executive Hostess, will be touching base with each of us to confirm attendance and culinary contributions.

### The Business Stuff:

● As I knew there would be, there have been some corrections and additions to our Membership List. Please find a revised listing attached.

#### FSRS EXECUTIVE MEETING PRECIS - OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER MEETINGS

● As announced by President Bill Bischoff at the October general meeting, a deputation of the growers who sell at our annual Plant Sale requested that the FSRS reconsider the percentage split between the growers and the FSRS. The motion to decrease the FSRS percentage of sales from 25% to 20% was passed, and the proceeds to our Chapter from the 2012 Plant Sale scheduled for 24 APR 2012 will be calculated on that basis.

● Harold Fearing, who is handling the proposed slate for the January 2012 elections, noted that the positions of Secretary, Vice-President, and Newsletter Editor are still unfilled. The work load for the positions of Secretary and Vice-President are not particularly onerous, usually involving about eight meetings over the course of the year. The position of Newsletter Editor involves a bit more commitment, but unless someone steps forward, The Yak will cease as of January 2012. However, realistically there is no requirement that The Yak maintain its present format, and perhaps someone would like to consider taking over this responsibility and changing the format or frequency to better suit their available time and energy.

● The Vancouver Rhododendron Society contacted our Chapter to request that each of our summer Picnic events be scheduled so as not to conflict. It was agreed that FSRS will hold its annual June Picnic and Auction on Saturday, June 9<sup>th</sup>, and VRS will hold theirs on Sunday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>.

● During the October Executive meeting it was agreed that we would discontinue the "Secret Santa" portion of the annual Christmas Potluck. Instead all Chapter members will be encouraged to bring either foodstuffs or a cash donation for the Food Bank.

#### OTHER DUTIES AS ASSIGNED: .

● The Ladies Joan (Bengough and McGiveron) are listed as the November tea crew. The rest of us need to remember to bring in some goodies now and again to help the Tea Staff in their efforts.

*Brenda Macdonald*



# The Book Cart

*The Jade Garden*

by Peter Wharton, Brent Hine, Douglas Justice

Timber Press Inc., Portland, Oregon, 2005, \$47.50

228 pages, approx. 218 colour photos.

Bibliography, Index

ISBN 9780881927054

Peter Wharton had been Curator since 1975 of the David C. Lam Asian Garden, a component of the University of British Columbia Botanical Garden and Centre for Plant Research. Peter's professional career was centered on the development of this unique forest garden, in concert with extensive plant exploration in China.

Brent Hine has been Curator of the E.H. Lohbrunner Alpine Garden at the UBC Botanical Garden and Centre for Plant Research since 1997. Away from the garden setting, the natural sciences have always held a fundamental fascination for him.

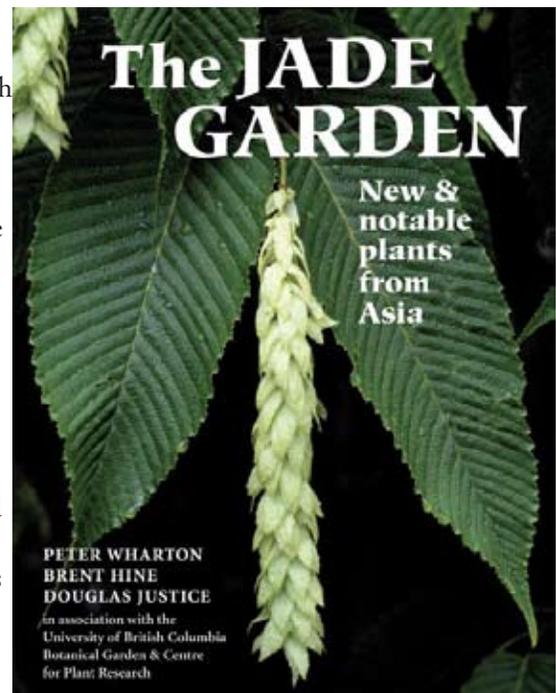
Douglas Justice is Associate Director and Curator of Collections at UBC Botanical Garden and Centre for Plant Research. A teacher and writer, he is a specialist in woody plants and has a particular interest in maple taxonomy.

The Jade Garden is an authoritative guide to 150 ornamental trees, plants, shrubs and perennials, based on detailed research and observation of one of the oldest and largest collections of Asian plants in North America. The authors have included only selections which have undergone thorough evaluation at the University of British Columbia Botanical Garden for hardiness and garden appeal. In addition, the authors have taken special care to exclude potentially invasive plants, while introducing the reader to fascinating, exceptionally beautiful, and little-known Asian selections.

After the preface and a brief introduction discussing the East Asian flora and the natural landscapes of China and bordering regions, Justice includes a brief chapter on bio-invasiveness; something we have all experienced in a small or large way in our own gardens.

The main part of the book is divided into three parts: Part 1: Perennials, Part 2: Shrubs, Part 3: Trees. These are followed by a section on noted collectors of Asian plants and then the usual Conversion tables, Glossary, Bibliography and Index.

Although the colour photographs, which are stunning, are interspersed in several sections throughout the book, the organization of the description of plants is very good, since every plant for which there is an accompanying photo has the relevant plate number recorded directly to the right of the descriptive passage. No hardiness zone map is included, but since nearly all the plants described are from the UBC Botanical Garden, they are hardy for our region. Enjoy this book for some knowledge of plants that you know will definitely grow in our area.



Margaret Hodgson

# *R. fletcherianum*

While classified as a member of the Maddenia subsection, this plant does not display the usual level of tenderness associated with its other larger-leaved, larger-blossomed, and more perfumed co-members such as *R. excellens*, *R. nuttallii* and the eponymous *R. maddenii*.

Still, while not particularly flashy, this is a superior small-flowered yellow plant - freely flowering with widely funnel-shaped blossoms, often with red spotting on the upper part of the corolla. Its small, somewhat pointed leaves have an attractive bristly appearance. The plant remains quite compact when young, gaining legginess as it gets older but never losing its habit as a small bush rather than large shrub.

Easy to propagate and quick to blossom from seed, its blooming period ranges from March until May, although the earlier blossom time leaves some plants susceptible to late frost damage.

Not extensively distributed in its native south-east Tibet, *fletcherianum* was collected by Joseph Rock in 1932, and was first considered to be simply another form of *R. valentinianum*. Davidian described it as a new species in 1961.

*R. fletcherianum* has not produced a great many hybrids, but in the words of the great Spencer Tracy, 'what there is, is cherce'. To its progeny, *fletcherianum* passed on its propensity for re-bloom in the fall, its reddish fall foliage, and, perhaps less helpfully, its need for perfect drainage.

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



Engraving by Lillian Snelling, 1951  
Curtis's Botanical Magazine

Peter Cox used *fletcherianum* extensively in his "Bird" series developed during the 1970s. First there 'Curlew', 1970, a reliable re-bloomer with attractive red spotting on the large bright yellow blossoms; then 'Chiffchaff' in 1976, with a lovely lemon-yellow flower and red winter foliage; and finally 'Teal' in 1977, with its very attractive red, exfoliating bark. All of these are compact plants, usually wider than tall, with only 'Teal' reaching up to the 3' mark.

Warren Berg also used *fletcherianum* when he produced his garden gem 'Patty Bee'. With small, dark green leaves, this compact plant is often covered in clear yellow flowers. Its ability to tolerate both sun and heat has made it a very popular choice.

And finally there is 'Isola Bella', whose ethereal and delicate appearance belies its formidable hardiness. Developed by J. B. Brueckner of Mississauga, Ontario, it grows happily in such unlikely places as Pennsylvania and Finland.

Brenda Macdonald



left *R.* 'Curlew' - P. Cox, 1970  
*R. ludlowii* x *R. fletcherianum*  
a reliable re-bloomer, with lovely red sprinkles  
on the upper lobe of the corolla

below *R.* 'Isola Bella' - J. B. Brueckner, 1979  
*R. fletcherianum* 'Yellow Bunting' x *R. dauricum*  
'Arctic Pearl'.  
'Yellow Bunting' is a named form of *fletcherianum*  
selected by E.H.M. and P.A. Cox.



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



left *R.* 'Patty Bee' - W. Berg, 1970  
*R. keiskei* var. *ozawae* 'Yaku Fairy' x *R.*  
*fletcherianum*  
a little patch of sunshine for your  
garden when the small, dark green  
leaves are dwarfed by the 2" clear yellow  
flowers