

The Yak

Newsletter of
the Fraser South
Rhododendron
Society

Volume 26 Number 2
February 2012



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, February 15, 2012

Topic: "Alpine Jewels of the Olympic and
Wenatchee Mountains of Washington State"

Speaker: David Sellars

Plant Sales: Colleen Bojczuk

2012 Officers

President:	Brenda Macdonald	604-990-5353
Past Pres:	Bill Bischoff	604-589-6134
Vice Pres:	Chris Hodgson	604-541-2382
Secretary:	Margaret Hodgson	604-541-2382
Treasurer:	Harold Fearing	604-857-4136
Directors:	Matt Groves	604-856-2624
	Ginny Fearing	604-857-4136
	Nancy Moore	604-859-3690
Programme:	Sean Rafferty	604-990-5353
Membership:	Evelyn Jensen	604-857-5663
Newsletter:	Sean Rafferty	604-990-5353
Librarian:	Joan McGiveron	604-538-9347
Website:	Chris Klapwijk	604-581-0925
Social Convenor	Karen Linton	604-888-6564
Refreshments	Arlene Darby	604-597-1849
BCCGC Liaison	Bill Bischoff	604-589-6134

Quick Hits

Our February speaker, David
Sellars, will be speaking to us
of Sax....among other things.



See inside for details - page 4 .



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Notes From the Chair

With the new position comes a new avatar. That's the new me, on the left. One of the advantages of being the ex-editor, or more probably of being cohabitant of the same computer with the new editor, is that I get to choose my own image. You will note that for the first time in ten years, the President is not represented by a gardener. I think that is because I do not think of myself as a gardener. I think of myself as a person who grows plants and does an awful lot of weeding. I never seem to quite get the big picture. It is probably tied up with the bud-vase thing I discussed in a previous edition of the Yak (my complete inability to successfully arrange a bouquet of flowers, necessitating my use of individual bud vases for each floral item). My eye always seems

to be drawn to the part rather than the whole. Interestingly enough, this seemed to be an outlook very prevalent in Japan when I visited there a number of years ago.

The small towns and countryside of Japan did not strike me as particularly attractive landscapes. Every vista fairly bristled with poles and transmission lines of various kinds. Whatever groundscape there was around private dwellings was certainly more utilitarian than decorative, with trash-burning piles and collections of obsolete equipment much in evidence. But what I did see, almost without exception, was a single thing or very small area of great care and beauty. It might be a niche by the front door with an ikebana-like flower arrangement or religious shrine. Or it might be a single pot with a particularly attractive azalea or maple. But there was usually something on which one could focus one's view. It seemed to me that the Japanese had raised the ability to concentrate on the particular and ignore the general to a very fine art indeed.

And while I cannot begin to emulate the degree of natural design and creativity that I saw there, I do suffer from the same propensity to concentrate on the individual rather than the group. And that is why I am not really a gardener.

On to more mundane matters. During a discussion at the last Executive and Directors meeting it became apparent that none of us had a good grasp of what part our annual membership fees play in the overall picture of the club finances.

Herewith, Membership Fees 101:

FSRS Annual Membership Fee	\$35.00
ARS levy	-\$30.00 USD
District One levy	-\$ 2.50
BCCGC Insurance	<u>-\$ 1.00</u>
Balance (net income to FSRS)	\$ 1.50

Of course this is only the situation when the Canadian dollar is on par with the American dollar. During the dark days of 2002, sending down \$30.00 USD actually cost us upwards of \$45.00 CDN.

All of which is only useful because it illustrates several of the basic precepts under which the FSRS orders its activities: 1) that the Club, on the whole, wants to support existing members and encourage the joining of new members to the extent that it is willing to financially subsidize membership fees to maintain them at a very reasonable level, and 2) that our two main fund-raising events, the Plant Sale in April and the Picnic and Auction in June are what make all the other activities of the club possible. Interestingly enough, we usually make enough money from the raffle table to cover the rental of the hall, but everything else is funded by the Plant Sale and Auction. Without those income-generating activities there would be virtually no other activities: no speakers, no equipment for the speakers to use, no bus tours, no library. Just thought you all might like to know.

The other item that came up for a decision during the Executive meeting was what to do with the equipment we acquired with the amalgamation of the Peace Arch chapter. There are two projectors, both of them superfluous to our needs, and it was decided that they should be sold as quickly as possible while they still retain some of their initial value. It was further decided that it was only fair to offer this equipment to our members first, before seeking other ways to realize some return on the original investment.

We therefore decided that the most equitable method would be an auction, with reserve prices as follows:

Kodak Carousel Slide Projector	reserve price \$75.00
Benq Digital Projector	reserve price \$200.00

Both items are in excellent condition. The digital projector has only a few hours use on it. A cursory survey of the web will show that these reserve prices are well below those for similar items on Kijiji or Craig's List.

Here is the way it will work. If you are interested, send an email to Nancy Moore at nlmoore (at) telus (dot) net (I trust you all know how to translate that into a valid email address) or telephone her at 604-859-3690, and let her know the amount you wish to bid on which article. Nancy will advise each of the bidders if a higher bid been received in order to allow the bidder to raise his or her bid and continue in the auction or to drop out. All bids must be received by Tuesday, March 20th, and the successful bidders will be announced at our meeting on Wednesday, March 21st.

And that, as they say, is that! I welcome all members back for the FSRS year 2012 and look forward to seeing you at the next meeting.

Brenda Macdonald



For the past 10 years, Brenda and her “Yak” have been inseparable and the relinquishment of the reins is an unfortunate day indeed; and only mildly tempered by the packing up of her brilliant wit and insight, and shifting it from the newsletter over to the President’s chair of our little group. Her work with the newsletter has set the bar incredibly high for those who follow. Many thanks, and Fraser South salutes you.



FROM THE EDITOR

Last Month:

Was our Annual General Meeting. While some of our members, particularly those residing east of Langley, were thwarted, by snow and a rather chilly blast of winter, in their effort to attend the soiree, a quorum of hardy and resolute souls triumphed over the elements. And a fine time it was. Not only was our slate of officers and directors installed with nary a blip of negative campaign advertising, but it was all accomplished while inhaling samples from an expansive selection of scrumptious desserts.

As a reward for all our toil, Chris Hodgson treated us to some lovely images of his own garden and other gardens that he has visited; and later, Bill Bischoff, with the help of Harry Jans, carried us away on a botanical exploration of western China - without need for quinine, ducolax, twinrix or any of the other usually required potions or discomforts. Truly enjoyable, and everyone should

give themselves huge pats of the back for the fine effort in preparation of all those wonderful desserts and making our AGM so pleasurable.

This Month:

We are very pleased to have David Sellars speak with us. For those who are new to the club, I should mention that David is a former executive of Fraser South and his wife Wendy was the editor of the "Yak". David is currently President of the Alpine Garden Club of BC and both David and Wendy have travelled extensively in the Alps, Pyrenees and western North America searching for alpine plants, and collecting seed. David's talk is entitled "**Alpine Jewels of the Olympic and Wenatchee Mountains, Washington State**" and will be adorned by his beautiful, award winning photography. He also maintains an appealing website featuring alpine wildflower hikes, with contributors from around the world. Should you wish an hors d'oeuvre, please see: www.mountainflora.ca

At this month's meeting Colleen will be bringing for sale her wide selection of beautifully grown, must-have plants for our gardens.

Absent these past two months, the raffle table will have its cobwebs removed and be nicely burnished in order to hold its always-interesting allotment of treasure. Yes, it is February, but please challenge yourselves to locate a little something from the garden or elsewhere, to set upon the table. Aside from being a great deal of fun, our raffle table is a significant engine that helps drives the economy of our club. All donations to the raffle and toothsome tables will be warmly welcomed.



R. Razorbill

Not yet in bloom. But along with the recent warm weather, comes hope ... perhaps soon.

Photo: Sean Rafferty

Next Month:

We shall welcome, from Victoria, Carmen Varcoe, who will bundle up and transport us to the flora and peoples in the remote Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan.

The Business Stuff:

Below are listed the officers and crew of the "Good Ship Fraser South" who shall merrily sail her through the waters of 2012, whilst deftly avoiding any proximity to the island of Giglio, off the Tuscan coast.

ELECTED OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS FOR 2012:

President -	Brenda Macdonald	Past President -	Bill Bischoff
Vice-President -	Chris Hodgson	Director, Year 3 -	Matt Groves
Secretary -	Margaret Hodgson	Director, Year 2 -	Ginny Fearing
Treasurer -	Harold Fearing	Director, Year 1 -	Nancy Moore

VOLUNTEER POSITIONS FOR 2012:

Membership -	Evelyn Jensen	Library -	Joan McGiveron
Website -	Chris Klapwijk	Refreshments -	Arlene Darby
Programme -	Sean Rafferty	Social Convenor -	Karen Linton
Tour Coordinator -	Chris Klapwijk	BCCGC Liaison	Bill Bischoff
Newsletter -	Sean Rafferty		

Correction

Karen Linton, writes that she mistakenly received credit in the January "Yak" for the preparation and baking of the magnificent ham, that I especially enjoyed, at our Christmas potluck. The ham, both this year *and* last, was actually due to the hard work of **Joan and Terry McGiveron**. I humbly extend both our apologies for the oversight and our gratitude for their kindness and labour on our behalf.

☛ Mary Parker, ARS District One Director, has passed on a reminder to all those considering attendance at the **ARS Convention in Asheville, North Carolina**, that the registration fee goes up by **\$25.00 after March 1st**. Be there, or be square!

☛ **ARS Fall Western Regional Conference Photo Contest** - It is not too early to be thinking about entering some photos in the upcoming Fall Conference contest. More details will be forthcoming, but you can start preparing for a full summer of snapshot taking by going in and dusting off your lenses, right now.

☛ As a result of Bill Bischoff's ongoing liaison with other garden clubs to extend reciprocal invitations to each other's meetings and events, The Burnaby Rhododendron and Garden Society welcomes our members to attend **The Burnaby Rhododendron Festival on Sunday, May 6th., at Deer Lake Park, Burnaby**, where they promotes the appreciation of rhododendrons with a plant sale, silent auction, rhodo truss display, spring bouquet competition and horticultural information. This event is sponsored by the City of Burnaby, and well worth attending. As I recall, they even had events for children and you may also find some of our own plant vendors there.

☛ **Other Duties as Assigned -**

The February Tea Team of Lori Bayes, Cherry Groves and Lois Williams are up to bat, to handle the tea and coffee duties for our enjoyment this month. I am sure that any additional nibblies brought to the meeting would help them out nicely

Sean Rafferty.

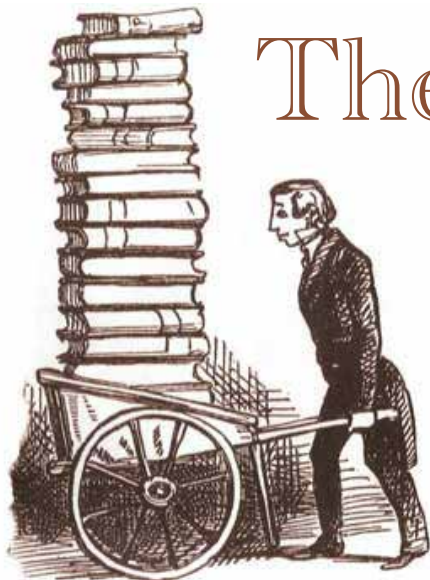
-THE CALENDAR:

Wednesday, Feb 15	Fraser South Chapter David Sellars - Alpine Jewels of the Olympic and Wenatchee Mountains, Washington State
Thursday, Feb 16	Vancouver Chapter David Sellars - From Rhododendrons to Rock Gardens
Thursday, Mar 15	Vancouver Chapter Gordon McKay - Companion Plants for Rhododendrons
Wednesday, Mar 21	Fraser South Chapter Carmen Varcoe - Flora of Bhutan
Wednesday, Apr 18	Fraser South Chapter Ron Long - Pink Mountain
Saturday April 21	Alpine Garden Club of BC Spring Show and Sale Van Dusen Floral Hall 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM
Saturday April 21	Fraser South Rhododendron Society United Church Hall, 5673 - 200th., Street, Langley
Saturday, May 5	Vancouver Rhododendron Show and Sale Park and Tilford Gardens, North Vancouver
Sunday, May 6	Burnaby Rhododendron Festival Deer Lake Park, Burnaby
May 4 - 7	2012 ARS Convention - Asheville. N.C.

*Primula
secundiflora*
Sichuan, China

Photo
Brenda Macdonald





The Book Cart

Hardy Rhododendron Species by James Cullen
 Timber Press, Inc. Portland Oregon, 2005
 496 pages, approx. 172 colour photos,
 Bibliography, index.
 Hardbound \$69.95

Dr. James Cullen is Director of the Stanley Smith (U.K.) Horticultural Trust based in Cambridge. He served as Assistant Regius Keeper at the RBG Edinburgh from 1972 to 1989, where he was responsible for research

on Rhododendron classification based on both dried and living collections. From 1976 to 2000 he was editor of *The European Garden Flora* (Cambridge University Press).

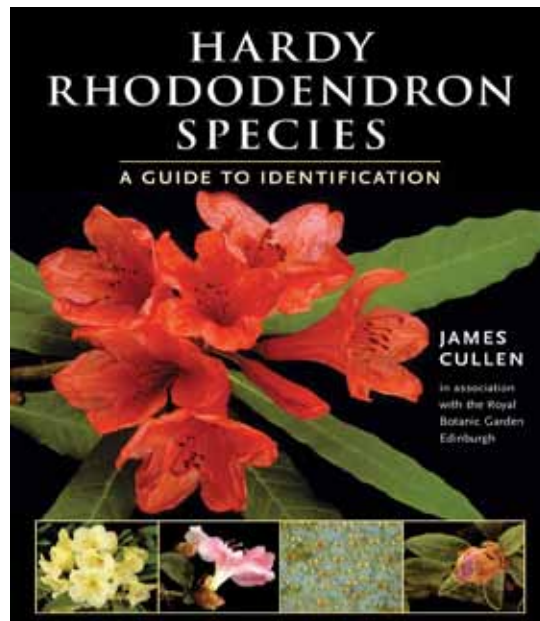
Hardy Rhododendron Species, A Guide to Identification is specifically directed towards identification of species of the genus *Rhododendron* that are cultivated in Britain, western Europe, and parts of North America. The stress is very much on the species: this is not a manual for the identification of hybrids.

The book is organized following normal practice and standard taxonomic forms (keys and descriptions): - species identification, subgenera, sections, and subsections. The descriptions are broken down into individual characteristics as to make comparison of one with another as easy as possible. In addition to the standard dichotomous keys, two other identification tools are provided: identification tables and character lists appear at the end of the book.

A long introduction of twenty-six pages includes the History of Classification, but also explains the current classification. The description continues on to include, with good diagrams, the physical characteristics of 1) leaves – position, shape, duration, 2) indumentum (hairs or scales) which may be present, 3) corolla shapes, 4) ovary shapes.

Following the introduction, Cullen leads the reader into thorough information of each subgenus with its corresponding subsections, before moving on to the next subgenus. Prior to the descriptions of the various subgenera and subsections, Cullen has given a clear explanation to his system of “Keys and Descriptions” by example.

Margaret Hodgson



The following will give an example of the organization of the material:

27: *Rhododendron williamsianum* Rehder and Wilson
 Illustration Curtis's Botanical Magazine, 8935 (1922) reprinted
 Habit dwarf shrub to 1.5 m; young shoots glandular-bristly; bark grey-brown, shredding
 Leaves ovate-circular, 2 – 4.5 cm
 Inflorescence Buds elongate-ovoid, dark red towards base
 Calyx to 1 mm, glandular-ciliate
 Corolla campanulate, 3 – 4 cm, pale pink with darker spots
 Stamens filaments hairless; anthers brown
 Ovary glandular
 Style glandular to the apex
 Capsule 1.5 – 1.8 cm
 Distribution western China (central Sichuan)
 Flowering spring
 Hardiness Zone 7

The above example is accompanied with a photograph of the flower and a microscopic image of the leaf surface. Only about one third of the identification entries include photographs which is disappointing. No plant hardiness zone map is included which is a drawback. The index is excellent.

R. forrestii group

This delightful prostrate species was discovered growing on a mossy rock in southeast Tibet, by George Forrest in 1905. It has subsequently been located in northeast Yunnan, Upper Burma and Arunchal Pradesh. Current opinion seems to hold that *R. forrestii* group contains only one 'good' species which takes two forms; *repens*, which is prostrate and creeping, and *tumescens* which has more of a mounding habit and which flowers somewhat more freely than *repens*. Cox and Cox indicate that *chamaethompsonii*, which is also included in this group is most likely a natural hybrid and which exhibits more flowers per inflorescence. *R. forrestii* is noted for having only a single or sometimes double inflorescence. Despite its small stature, 15cm (6in) tall with small attractive, obovate leaves and fleshy crimson, scarlet and carmine flowers 3-3.5 cm (1-1.5in.) long, *R. forrestii* is a beautiful and charming specimen to have in your garden or rockery. That is if you find the right spot for it. As noted above, Forrest discovered it growing on a moist, mossy rock, so if you have one of those hanging about you should be in good shape. Or are you? Cox and Cox suggest careful siting on a wall facing away from the sun but in the open, and if it is in too much shade it will not flower. Shade but not too much shade and in the open? I take that to mean

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



R. forestii Group

deciduous filtered shade in the open on a mossy rock. We live in the rainforest of North Vancouver and that particular requirement is difficult to achieve. However what does seem to work for us here is sticking them atop old mossy stumps and allowing them to layer themselves down the sides. Please don't let these siting challenges dissuade you from bringing this species into your garden. Pushing the envelope is often a good thing and a carpet of charming *forrestii* is a marvelous reward.

R. forrestii's compact habit, attractive leaves and flowers and its ability to retain these attributes when used as a parent in hybridising, has managed to find favour with many hybridisers throughout the world, particularly in Germany. Dietrich Hobbie's, crossing of *R. forrestii* with *R. 'Essex Scarlett'* during the 1950's and 1960's brought many (perhaps too many) hybrids into the market and some linger to this day. If I had to choose a favorite of his, I would hang it on *R. 'Baden-Baden'*, a low growing, glossy green-leaved, showy red, large, waxy-flowered beauty. From England and Lionel de Rothschild came the finest gem of the *R. forrestii* hybrids which is *R. 'Carmen'*

, created from two wonderful *R. neriflorum* species, *R. forrestii* and *R. sanguineum ssp didymum*. There has also been local hybridising success from Ted and Mary Grieg, of Royston on Vancouver Island, who produced a cross from *R. forrestii* and *R. thompsonii*, producing the sweet *R. 'Royston Red'*. The above mentioned hybrids are certainly favorites of mine and I am quite partial to the small *Rhododendrons* that make such a large impact.

Sean Rafferty



Left - *R. 'Baden Baden'*
Low growing and floriferous
with bright green leaves
(*'Essex Scarlet x forrestii Group'*)
Hobbie, 1945

Below - *R. 'Carmen'*
small is beautiful and this is
one of the sweetest.
(*R. sanguineum ssp didymum*
x forrestii Group')
Rothschild 1934



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



top

R. 'Royston Red'

Fine parentage shows through in this early season beauty
(*forrestii* Group x *thompsonii*)
Grieg, before 1960)

Bottom

R. 'Anna's Riplet'

Compact and interesting plant with rose pink flowers that fade to soft yellow as it ages.
(*forrestii* Group x 'Letty Edwards')
Lem, unregistered





Top left

R. 'Elizabeth'

Compact habit, beautiful foliage with intriguingly coloured flowers. Loved by all, especially weevils.

(*forrestii* Group x *griersonianum*)

- Aberconway, 1939



Middle left

R. 'Riplit'

Another of Lem's crosses with *R. 'Letty Edwards'*. A dwarf plant with glowing pink and yellow flowers

(*Forrestii* Group x '*Letty Edwards'*)

-Lem, 1962

Right

R. 'Ruby Hart'

Almost black red flowers on a compact plant with deep green leaves. A beautiful eye catcher.

([*Carmen* x *Elizabeth*] x *elliottii*)

-Whitney Sather 1976.

