

The Yak

Newsletter of
the Fraser South
Rhododendron
Society

Volume 26 Number 1
January 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: Wednesday, January 18,

2012 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

IN ADDITION TO OUR
10TH ANNUAL DESSERT EXTRAVAGANZA

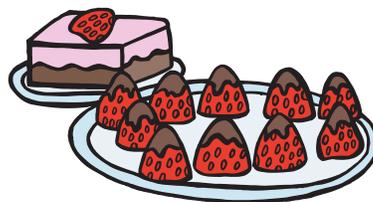
2011 Officers

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

Here they are - the activities that make our AGM such an enjoyable evening: watching, listening and eating.

We get to see some pretty pictures and listen to other Club Members chat about their activities



over the past year, and we get to sample an entire array of wonderful desserts. Who could resist?





FROM THE PRESIDENT

Notes From the Chair

This is the last report of the year 2011 and it is also my last report as President of the Fraser South Rhododendron Society. It was a pleasant experience for me, especially the last year, where the most outstanding event was when members from two neighboring Rhododendron clubs joined our society. To the new members hopefully it will be a happy new beginning in the company of like-minded horticulturists. To us, the members of the FVRS and the PARS are a valuable addition of talents. Already several of the new friends have agreed to stand as candidates for our new board of executives, to be elected at our next meeting in January.

It is a sad state of affairs to see the two rhododendron clubs located closest to ours close their doors because of a dwindling membership. By no means are we alone with this problem in our area. Other horticultural clubs in southwestern BC are complaining about dwindling membership as well. I attend meetings of the BC Council of Garden Clubs twice a year, in Spring and in the Fall, where I have contacts with executive members of many clubs mainly from the Lower-Mainland. Many of these executive members have also commented on the stagnant status of their membership.

What are the problems, what are the solutions? Many of our members are now past retirement age and no longer have access to gardens of the size they once had when they first became interested in gardening and in rhododendrons. In addition, because of a reduction of lot sizes for newer houses, there is not much space left for growing large trees and shrubs. This is where we come in, by providing informative demonstrations and advice on cultivating rhododendrons of smaller sizes, especially plants suited for pot cultures - that is, patio-sized rhododendrons, including many Species rhododendron whose growth habit and sizes are known. Our next plant sale in April would be a good place to offer such a demonstration, by showing potted miniature rhododendrons and how to prune them. Other places to provide such information would be plant sales at nearby Garden Clubs and also at plant nurseries, as well as Open Houses of our members.

To get new members, each of us can invite friends, neighbors and relatives to any of our events, such as meetings with special speakers, our truss show, our annual plant sale, our Christmas Party, etc. Our event calendar could be shared with other nearby plant societies. Let people know that we are a club that is also interested in many other plant and flower related activities.

Now to our recent Christmas Dinner; what a delightful event. When entering the hall one could see the very inviting table layout and decor. Already the kitchen emitted a promising, festive scent. Matching this was the overall good humour our members and guests brought along. Thanks to all our members, new members and guests who came in such a large number. Thanks also to Karen and Larry who planned this party some weeks before. Phone calls had to be made to invite everyone and coordinate the menu. The table decorations had to be made in advance, therefore Karen invited Carla and Arlene to help. Karen and Les prepared the festive ham and turkey respectively, as they had done in the past. To everyone's delight and enjoyment Colleen presented her word puzzle, this time based on some BC city names. The calls of excitement from the participants when a correct name was found, attested to the great success of this game. The overall happy Christmas spirit was also demonstrated by the generous donations to the Langley Food Bank. Two large, heavy and filled-to-the-brim boxes were delivered the very next day to the Langley Food Bank, where they were received with amazement and gratitude. A check for \$535.00 in donations was delivered by Harold a couple of days later. Just to think that our gifts will have some fellow citizens smile during the holidays adds to the overall warm feeling of giving. Thank you again to all and especially to the members who were so very active in the preparation of this festive get-together.

Looking ahead, the New Year promises to be interesting and filled with activities. The first activity will be to elect a new executive board. Thanks to the effort of Harold we do have a complete slate of candidates, many of whom will bring years of experience to the job. Our yearly plant sale has been booked for Saturday, April 21st with most of the vendors confirmed. The picnic is planned for Saturday, June 9th; this is one week after the Vancouver Rhododendron Society's picnic, which is planned for Sunday, June 3rd. We are still talking of a two day bus tour to Vancouver Island and a one day tour to gardens and parks in Vancouver. There are several days of meetings and shows planned by District 1 for Vancouver Island. Dates and places will be posted in the newsletter.

Now just a reminder, for our January meeting please bring some slides, pictures or other garden-related material to be shown or displayed. Not to forget our refreshments which are always special on our election meeting. I hope that everyone had a splendid holiday season and wish you a good year ahead. Thank you again for the privilege of being the president of this splendid Rhododendron Society.

Bill Bischoff

Lost and Found

The Christmas Potluck postprandial clean-up crew reports that a suitably festive piece of jewelry was found on the floor during the general sweep up. Should the bijou pictured at right belong to you, please contact Arlene Darby, who is anxious to return it to its rightful owner.



Just in case you need reminding of what is around only a few more corners, here is a photo of the spring display at Harold and Ginny Fearing's garden, "Fearing's Farm Nursery".

(photo - Harold Fearing)



FROM THE EDITOR

Last Month:

Our Christmas Potluck! What more needs to be said? Personal enjoyment and community philanthropy accomplished in a single evening. Now that is what I call multi-tasking.

This Month:

Newspaper and popular magazines may be filled with advice about new regimes for the New Year, but we aren't quite there yet. New members and all those joining us from PARS and FVRS need to be initiated into Fraser South's Annual General Meeting protocol.

The AGM is a necessary part of our function as a Society and is the time at which we elect new Club Officers, and ratify the Financial and Auditor's Reports. Then there is the fun stuff - the awards to club members who have provided so much that makes our club function, and the opportunity for club members to show a few pictures and talk about, well, anything that interests them - a sort of grown-up Show and Tell.

All of which is made even more palatable, literally, by the frequent pauses to explore the delights of the 10th Annual Dessert Extravaganza. It all makes easing into your New Year's resolutions much easier, and much more meaningful.

So remember to bring along a little something for the groaning board. Tea and coffee, and plates and utensils will all be supplied, but do bring along any serving implements necessary to move your contributions off their serving dishes and onto the plates of the all those eager consumers.

Next Month:

Next month will be our first regular meeting of the new year. It will be business as usual. We will have a Speaker, we will have a Raffle Table, we will have a Plant Seller, we will have Tea and Coffee Elves, and lots of chatter afterwards. What I cannot confirm just at this moment is who it is who will be fulfilling all those positions.

In the meantime, what I do know is that February is the "Incredible Edibles" issue of the Yak. So if there was something that you particularly enjoyed from our monthly display of treats, or from the Christmas Potluck, or from last summer's Picnic, now is the time to front up and ask me to obtain the recipe. And speaking of fronting up, would the person who so kindly gave me the photocopied recipe of that marvellous Cheese Torta please step forward? I had been saving the recipe for publication for months, only to discover that I have misplaced it. And now I cannot even remember who was so generous as to give it to me. Clearly it was all too taxing for my tiny little gerbil-brain.

The Business Stuff:

PROPOSED SLATE OF 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

LIST OF VOLUNTEER POSITIONS FOR 2012:

Membership -	Evelyn Jensen	Library -	Joan McGiveron
Website -	Chris Klapwijk	Tea Roster -	Arlene Darby
Programme -	Sean Rafferty	Social Convenor -	Karen Linton
Tour Coordinator -	Chris Klapwijk	Newsletter -	Sean Rafferty

- **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.
- **University of Washington Botanic Gardens - Calendar** - President Bill contacted this organization as part of our outreach program to publicize our April Plant Sale in as many places as possible. They have already posted our date on their calendar, and sent us a link. This is a very comprehensive listing of horticultural events in the Pacific Northwest. Although many of them take place in Washington State there is still a lot of information about events around the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island. This is a very user-friendly and comprehensive site. Here is a link to the calendar: http://depts.washington.edu/hortlib/calendar/tours_sales.php
- **Other Duties as Assigned** - We start out the year with Arlene Darby, Karen Linton, and Carla Bischoff providing the lashings of tea and coffee necessary to make a Dessert Extravaganza work.

Brenda Macdonald

THE CALENDAR:

Wednesday, Jan 18	Fraser South Chapter AGM and 10th Annual Dessert Extravaganza
Thursday, Jan 19	Vancouver Chapter AGM, and Popcorn and a Movie
Wednesday, Feb 15	Fraser South Chapter Monthly meeting
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
May 4 - 7	2012 ARS Convention - Asheville. N.C.

A bouquet of *R. moupinense* as seen at Fearing's Farm. Note particularly the planting in the stump, and see page 7 for more information. (photos - Harold Fearing)





The Book Cart

The Well-Tended Perennial Garden
 by Tracy DiSabato-Aust,
 Timber Press, Inc. Portland, Oregon, 1998, \$34.95
 269 pages, approx. 125 colour photos, Black and white illustrations,
 1 U.S. Hardiness zone map, Bibliography, Index, Three Appendices.
 Hardbound ISBN-10: 0881928038.

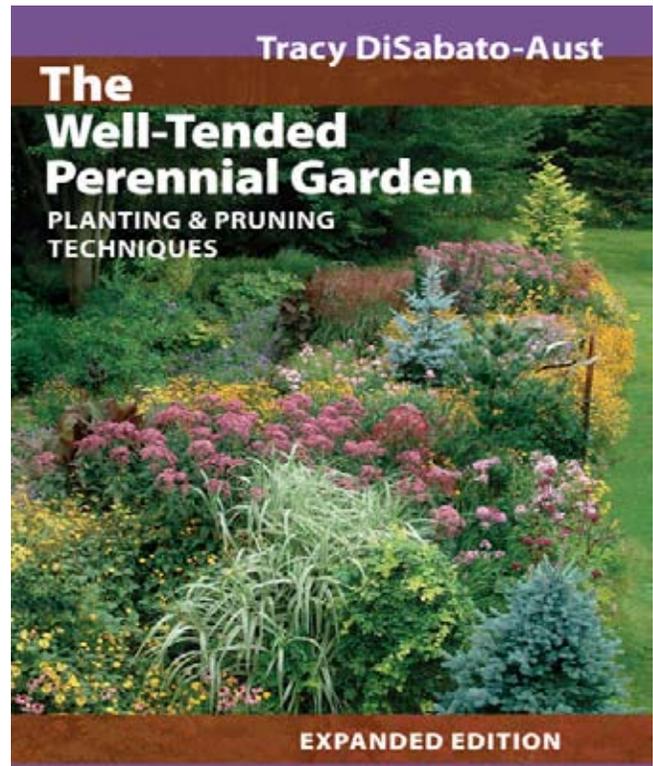
Tracy DiSabato-Aust holds a B.S. and a M.S. degree in horticulture from The Ohio State University. She has worked for more than twenty years as a landscape designer, horticultural consultant, writer and lecturer, with many of her articles appearing in prominent gardening magazines and programmes in the U.S.A.

The book, *The Well-Tended Perennial Garden, Planting & Pruning Techniques* is organized into three sections, followed by three very useful appendices. Section One of the book covers basic perennial garden planting and maintenance, with the chapters divided into the basic elements of bed preparation, planting and establishment, pests and diseases, staking, division, and renovation of the established perennial garden. Section Two discusses the maintenance required to properly prune perennial gardens – pruning, deadheading, cutting back, pinching, thinning, and preparing for winter and spring. Section Three contains an encyclopedia of perennials, and is one of the best features of the book. The author has carefully thought out the faults of many other encyclopediae and has striven to overcome these problems. At right is an example of her descriptions.

Appendix A covers the specific requirements of ornamental grasses for maintenance and pruning, and a timed schedule of when pruning should occur. Appendix B sets out a yearly calendar for planting and maintaining the perennial garden. Appendix C gives the gardener a list of perennials that require specific maintenance and pruning. This list indicates what time of year these plants should be divided, plus a plethora of other useful information. Both the photographs and the illustrations in the book, particularly the latter, are useful in clearly demonstrating various points in the chapters.

A most useful book in any home gardener's library!

Margaret Hodgson



Achillea 'Coronation Gold'

Zone: 3 – 8 (Zone map included at back of book)

Family: Asteraceae

Description: mustard-yellow flower heads; fernlike, scented, gray-green foliage

Size: 2 – 3 ft (4 ft) high (indicates if size significantly differs when in flower) 3 ft. wide

Exposure: full sun

Flowering: June – August

Pruning: (Details of what is required)

Other Maintenance (many details here)

Related Plants: (list of plants within same family)

R. moupinense

On everybody's wish list, this is one of those shrublets that always seem to grow better in someone else's garden.

First discovered by Père David (he of *Davidia involucrata*, *Rhododendron davidii*, and who knows how many other zoological and botanical specimens) in 1870, it was introduced into cultivation by 'Chinese' Wilson in 1908 from seed collected around Mt. Omei in Sichuan.

Sometimes epiphytic, *moupinense* has a lax, somewhat straggly habit, allowing the lovely cinnamon-brown, peeling bark to show through the slightly bristly branchlets. Its dark green, shiny leaves seem disproportionately small when compared with the large, openly funnel-campanulate blossoms. The flowers are sometimes pure white with wine-coloured speckles, but more often have a pale or sometimes quite bright pink wash on the upper lobes.

Relatively slow growing, *moupinense* makes an excellent rockery plant. It is even somewhat (note the qualifier) tolerant of drought, but you will have the best results if you can provide that most elusive of growing media - the freely draining but moisture retentive, not barren but not overly rich, not compacted but not subject to constant soil

movement, loam - the Holy Grail of gardeners. Like its near relative *R. dendrocharis*, *moupinense* is a prime candidate for a stumpery. A well-rotted tree stump seem to provide the perfect consistently dampish but never really waterlogged environment necessary, plus it gets the blossoms up where they can be more closely examined and enjoyed.

An early bloomer, often starting to break in late February or early March, a late frost can sometimes lead to browned blossoms, but the damage is rarely severe and does not damage the bronzy new growth that will start to emerge after blossoming. More likely is that a series of spring downpours will reduce the delicate blossoms to a wet-tissue consistency, but again, the damage is never permanent.

The heavily-spotted white form typified by Smith's illustration (at left) of one of Wilson's collections is probably both less common and slightly less hardy than the pink-washed forms of later collections.

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



Engraving by Matilda Smith, 1915
Curtis's Botanical Magazine



And now to the progeny. Not widely used in hybridizing schemes, there have nevertheless been some remarkably attractive hybrids. On the face of it, it is hard to see why it was deemed suitable for hybridizing at all. A small, slow-growing plant with brittle shoots and a small root ball, subject to late frost damage - it must not have looked very promising. But then there are those blossoms - those first-glimpse-of-spring, disproportionately large but exceedingly delicate blossoms. Not to mention the red, peeling bark and dark green, shiny leaves. How could a hybridizer resist?

And they did come up with some classics: what would we do without the pale mauve signals from 'Olive' that spring is finally back. There is also 'Cilpinense', which allows us to have a *moupinense* look-alike when the species is hard to find.

Easy to tuck into the smallest urban garden, this is, all in all, a gem of a plant.

Brenda Macdonald



above - *R.* 'Bo-Peep'
- Rothschild, 1934
R. lutescens x *R. moupinense*
The influence of *lutescens*
can be seen in the yellow
spots on the upper lobe,
and the long recurved pistil.

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



All photos harvested
from the wonderful
"Hirsutum" site
[www.hirsutum.info/
index.html](http://www.hirsutum.info/index.html)
except for the
first photo of *R.*
moupinense, which
came from the
equally wonderful
"Botany Photo of
the Day" site at
UBC
[http://www.
botanicalgarden.ubc.
ca/potd/](http://www.botanicalgarden.ubc.ca/potd/)



top
R. 'Jodi'
- Lem, 1966
R. racemosum x *R. moupinense*
The upright habit, leaf shape and flower shape are strongly reminiscent of the *racemosum* parentage.



middle
R. 'Pink Snowflakes'
- Scott, 1968
R. racemosum x *R. moupinense*
Another *racemosum* cross, this one looks completely different from 'Jodi' - more *moupinense*, less *racemosum*.



bottom
R. 'Fine Feather'
- Aberconway, 1934
R. 'Cilpinense Group' x *R. lutescens*
Another *lutescens* cross, this one shows that influence in a pale yellow wash rather than in yellow spots, and in the longer narrower leaves and more rangy habit.



left and below
R. 'Cilpinense'
- Aberconway, 1923
R. ciliatum x *R. moupinense*
The classic *moupinense* cross
and beloved choice for nooks
and crannies everywhere.
Actually a grex or group of
sibling seedlings, the colours
can vary from the warm
pink at left to the pure white
below.



right
R. 'Seta'
- Aberconway, 1928
R. spinuliferum x *R. moupinense*
Another small gem, there is
a satisfying rhythm to the
blossom placement.

