

The Yak

Newsletter of
The Fraser South
Rhododendron
Society

Volume 26 Number 5
May 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, May 16, 2012

THE 19TH ANNUAL FRASER SOUTH RHODODENDRON SOCIETY JUSTLY FAMOUS BEER BOTTLE TRUSS SHOW



2012 Officers

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Refreshments	Arlene Darby	604-597-1849
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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Notes From the Chair

ABSENCE ALERT: There will be no June edition of The Yak. Information on both months' activities are contained herein.

Good grief, as Charlie Brown was wont to say. This looks to be a message consisting almost entirely of hectoring and instructions.

However, before I launch into the business details of the May "Justly Famous Beer Bottle Truss Show", and the June "Annual Potluck Picnic and Auction", I do want to take a few sentences to thank everyone who helped so ably and selflessly with our Annual Plant Sale held April 21st. We have already had the results from Treasurer Harold Fearing, and despite the threatening weather and the lack of participation by the group from the United Church, our sales were on par with last year's. As you know, this is one of the two major fund-raising events we hold each year, and I must admit it was extremely gratifying to see how many people signed up to help, many of them our newest members from the ex-PARS and ex-FVRS contingents. All in all, it was a job well done - kudos all around!

As you may be aware, both the President and the Editor will be travelling to China for a botanizing trip with Steve Hootman of the Rhododendron Species Foundation and a number of other like-minded individuals. The drastic press of other procrastinated activities means that this month's communication is going to be very much a matter of cut and paste from previous year's instructions. Moreover, it is only slightly embarrassing that last year's instructions were cut and pasted from the year before that ... right down to the whining about the miserable weather. On the plus side, this will be the first read for our new members; the rest of you can just skip on to the pretty pictures of *R. augustinii* further on in the newsletter.

The Justifiably Famous Beer Bottle Truss Show, Edition 19

Last month Garth Wedemire gave a brief lesson on truss preparation so we expect a little something from everyone. Try to think of our cool and rainy spring as a bonus - it has been beneficial in keeping all the blooms from ripening and passing over too quickly. For some of us the biggest challenge is going to be to find something in bloom, not worry about blossoms that have passed their peak. However, look hard, you will probably find several blooms almost there. You might find bringing them into the warmer house for a day or so before the show will open up their buds. In any event, bring what you have, it will be interesting to see how the variety of blossoms changes depending on how the spring has progressed. 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. Winners will be published in the September edition of The Yak.

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’*, a warm, butter-yellow blossom with a substantial calyx that develops from a brick-red bud, blossoming late in the rhodo-year, usually from early to mid-June. The prize awarded for this category is a coffee mug with a photo of ‘Lionheart’ printed on it. Those interested in a fuller account of this lovely rhodo should refer to the “Propagators and Pedigrees” article in the February, 2003 edition of *The Yak*, available at the FSRS website at <http://www.flounder.ca/frasersouth/index.asp>.

The Annual Potluck Picnic and Auction

June is the time for our other major fund raising function of the year - the annual auction. It will be preceded as usual by our wonderful potluck picnic. Karen Linton and Larry Morton will again be our gracious (and most appreciated) hosts. A map to their house is appended to this month’s newsletter. Sometime after the May meeting, either Karen or one of her kitchen elves will contact you to confirm attendance and the nature of your culinary contribution.

What’s really special about this fund-raising function is that it is a lot more fun and requires a lot less work (at least for most of the participants) than our Plant Sale. Certainly Larry and Karen, and the auctioneers and helpers do a yeoman’s service, but the rest of us get to simply sit around, visiting and chatting, and generally enjoying the afternoon. All the more reason to justify your attendance by bringing in a few worthwhile items to donate to the auction.

Here are the rules, chapter and verse:

Bring your treasures to the home of Karen Linton and Larry Morton, any time after 2:00 pm - tiny exquisite rockery specimens you have been clever enough to replicate, divisions of large robust perennial border plants that have begun to threaten your tiny exquisite rockery specimens, the occasional rhododendron that no longer fits into your planting scheme, any small John Deere tractors lurking about unused in your garage, decorative planters, bear-proof bird feeders ... you know, the usual stuff that somebody out there desperately needs and wants. Then you need to pick up a similar volume of goods and chattels to take back home with you by engaging in a spirited bidding war for the privilege of doing so. It’s perfect, it’s the steady state theory of home and garden maintenance. No carbon credits required. It is so green, it is blinding, and the club puts some money in the piggy-bank for next year. Come on, we are depending on you!

As for the picnic part, here is the cunning plan. Bring:

- a chair to sit upon
- a plate to eat off
- cutlery to eat with
- a wobbly-pop of your choice, if desired
- a mug for the wobbly-pop of your choice, or the tea and coffee that will be provided
- your potluck contribution, for sharing with others
- utensils to serve your potluck contribution, if necessary
- any friends, neighbours, or visiting relatives whom you think would enjoy meeting us and learning more about the FSRS

And that concludes the Presidential address for this month. I wish you all a happy and weed-free summer, and look forward to seeing everyone refreshed, reinvigorated and replete with gardening activities enjoyed over the summer, when we start up again next September.

Brenda Macdonald



FROM THE EDITOR

Last Month:

Last month we had Ron Long offer an impassioned advocacy for the preservation of the endangered flora and fauna of Pink Mountain in northeastern British Columbia. Ron, a professional photographer for forty years and a dedicated naturalist, has spent considerable time since 1985 observing the changes to all life forms upon Pink Mountain. Of pressing concern to Ron, is a dirt road up the south side of the mountain that is having a devastating effect on both plant and wildlife as the road cuts through the habitat on top of the mountain. This road originally serviced a forest fire lookout, but has recently been utilized to construct communication towers, powered by gasoline generators, whose servicing requirements negatively affect the habitat of many rare and endemic plants. There are also plans to erect a wind turbine. All of this activity is having an unfavorable impact on the plant

and animal life at the south end plateau at the top the mountain. Ron hopes to encourage the Environmental and Forestry Ministries of our Provincial Government to reroute the service road from the south end of the plateau to the northern end, and preserve this unique habitat.

As one might expect from a professional photographer, the visuals of his presentation were superb and the passion he held for his subject manifest. A rather lively question and answer session followed Ron's discourse. Further information concerning the issue of Pink Mountain may be found at <http://ecoreserves.bc.ca/2011/04/17/the-case-for-a-pink-mountain-er/>

This Month:

I expect that everyone will be counting the sleeps as the anticipated excitement of the Big Event of May 16th approaches. Our President has rather nicely and clearly set forth the rules of engagement above, and I am certain a grand time will be had by all. And for those wishing to establish a training regimen in order to be in top shape for the grand occasion, I offer up the following, which has all the really essential food groups. By popular demand:

Rhubarb Cake

Base:

1 1/2 cups flour
 3 tbsp. sugar
 3/4 cup butter or margarine
 Press above ingredients into a 9 x 13 pan. Bake at 350 F. for 15 mins. Cool base and cover with filling.

Mix together:

5 cups rhubarb, chopped
 3/4 cups milk
 1 1/4 cups white sugar
 4 egg yolks, beaten (reserve egg whites)

1 tsp. vanilla

3 tbsp. flour

(I usually put in a little nutmeg as I like the combination)

Bake filling on base for 45 mins. Remove from oven and top with meringue. Return to oven for 18 mins.

Basic Meringue:

4 egg whites

6 tbsp. sugar

Beat egg whites & sugar together until stiff & foamy

Enjoy,

Karen Linton

THE CALENDAR:

Sunday, May 13	Open Garden - "Wingswept Gardens" in Langley home of club members Gael and John Dodd, 11:00 am to 5:00 pm. This will be the last year for this annual event, so you are urged to take advantage of the opportunity to see this exquisite garden
Sunday, May 13	Mother's Day at the Glades - 561 172nd Street, Surrey 10:00 am - 4:00 pm. \$5.00 in advance or \$7.00 at the gate.

Wednesday, May 16	Fraser South Rhododendron Society Justly Famous Beer Bottle Truss Show
Thursday, May 17	Vancouver Rhododendron Society Walk in the Park - VanDusen Gardens, 7:00 pm
Saturday, June 9	Fraser South, Annual Picnic and Plant Auction, at the home of Karen Linton and Larry Morton. Please see map on last page for directions.

Next Month:

Please see the President's message above, with respect to The Annual June Picnic and Auction.

The Business Stuff:

The Victoria propagators group has been a very active, talented and generous group for some time and have extended the following invitation. If you have any interest in propagation, you would be well advised to attend.

The Victoria Propagating Group is going to hold another Propagating Workshop. This time it will be on October 13th, 2012. Again it will be at Madeleine and Ken's house – 5008 Old West Saanich Road, Saanich, B.C. This will be a hands-on type of thing where everyone will be able to choose cuttings and actually stick them in our propagator. We will be working mostly outside and in the garden, so warm and dry clothes will be necessary. Talks and discussions will include most of the local propagators and hybridizers. The charge will be \$25 and will include a hot lunch and coffee breaks. We will start around 9:30 am to give people from the mainland and up island time to get here. We hope to finish with an early dinner at a local restaurant (not included) to give enough time for everyone to get home if they have to.

For registration and questions email Ken and Madeleine at kenwebb@live.ca or phone 250-744-1785. Please register early because we do have limited space.

Victoria Propagating Group

District One Director, Mary Parker, reminds us once again that:

COMING SOON!
ARS Western Fall Regional Conference, Nanaimo B.C.
“RHODOS IN PARADISE - DESTINATION VANCOUVER ISLAND”
September 21st - 23rd, 2012
For full details:
Check out our brand new website at <http://arsnanaimo2012.ca/>
Registration is open now!
We encourage you to register early

Other Duties as Assigned:

The upstanding team consisting of Chuck Floyd, Larry Morton and Karen Linton will nurture us with food and drink at our next meeting. Please bring along a little delight to help them out.

Sean Rafferty



Nineteenth 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 1^{6th}. 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'

Trip to The Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society

On Wednesday, April 4th, Carla and I were invited by the Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society to give a presentation at their monthly meeting.

The meeting took place at the St. Johns Church in Duncan. Some of those attending came from as far away as Nanaimo and Victoria, attesting to a well promoted and organized event. Carla and I enjoyed this gathering very much, especially the questions asked during the talk, which showed a special interest in the subject presented.

Before we got to the meeting we met with Dixie Mueller and her husband (Associate members of our club) at their home west of Duncan. From there we drove south to the area of Cobble Hill, just west of Highway 1. We were invited by Liz and Alan Murray to supper and a tour of their splendid garden. The garden is laid out over a natural rocky outcrop on the southern part of their property and in front of their house. Apart from several natural Arbutus trees, the area has been planted mainly with rhododendrons, of which some are major specimens. Several areas had been underplanted with native perennials. One of these natives is at its northern most reach in this part of Canada, the beautiful and erect *Olsynium douglasii*.

When our club ventures on a trip to Vancouver Island, this garden should be a must visit.

No garden should be without a welcoming committee; in this case it was a beautiful and very tame peacock. This colorful bird followed us everywhere during our walk through this ever so well organized and very clean garden.

After the meeting we retired to Dixie's home for a well-deserved rest, where we fell asleep to the sound of a large number of frogs from a nearby pond. Early next morning, Dixie gave us a tour of her new home on an acre of land that includes wooded areas and a large pond. We envied her for having all the space to plant just about every rhododendron she can imagine.

We are grateful to all the members of the Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society who looked after us during this so-interesting visit to their part of wonderful British Columbia.

Carla & Bill Bischoff



Left:
garden
security
officer.

Right:
*Olsynium
douglasii*



Under the rhododendron, or just nearby

When the first flowery rush of early spring has slowed down, and the first cyclamen of the year, *C. coum*, has almost stopped blooming, then *Cyclamen repandum* starts to display its interesting foliage and very erect and elegant flowers, as if to make up for the loss. *Cyclamen repandum* is very different from its winter evergreen cousins. It has a very short foliage period. In mid-March the first leaves appear when they push up well past the leaves of the surrounding plants, to be followed by the ever so elegantly displayed flowers with their narrow petals. The different shades of magenta of the flowers contrast well against the fresh spring foliage of the rest of the garden. The blooming period is some six weeks long and the whole plant disappears in early July, when only the ripening seed pods are visible on the ground. The plant will remain dormant until next spring.

The leaves of *C. repandum* seem to look like just another *C. hederifolium*. However under closer examination, it can be seen that they have softly scalloped edges, very different from the serrated edges of the *C. hederifolium*. *Cyclamen repandum* can grow in light shade and full sun during the short time it is with us.

Bill Bischoff, with images from Carla Bischoff



Left and below:
Cyclamen repandum



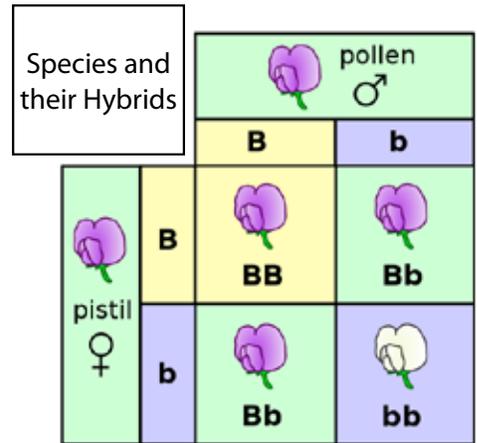
R. augustinii (epithet: after Augustine Henry)

If space would permit, a great deal more would be written of Augustine Henry other than that he was a Medical Officer in Chinese Customs and later, Professor of Forestry, Dublin. Further information may be gleaned from a pdf file at: <http://arnoldia.arboretum.harvard.edu/pdf/articles/1983-43-1-augustine-henry-and-the-exploration-of-the-chinese-flora.pdf>, that will give a glimpse to the breadth of the man's capabilities

R. augustinii was discovered by Henry in 1886 in the Patung district, of Hupeh Province, China. It was subsequently collected by others in the same region, and in western Sichuan, east and southeast Tibet, and northwest Yunnan. This is a large area of distribution and it also has a large range in elevation, growing from 4,000 feet to 11,000 feet, which contributes to *R. augustinii's* variability in its general features. This is a tall bushy species (4 ft. - 20 ft.) with generally hairy young stems. It grows at the margins of woods, in woodlands, spruce and pine forests, and in rocky situations. The leaves are lanceolate, oblong-lanceolate or obovate-elliptic, and downy when young. This downiness is retained on the midrib of the lower leaf surface. A diagnostic feature of all subspecies of *augustinii* is the densely hairy midrib of the lower leaf surface. The corolla is widely funnel shaped and 0.5 inches - 1.75 inches long and the flower colour ranges from pink, rose, pale lavender-rose, purple, lilac purple, deep lavender-purple, pale or dark lavender-blue, intense violet, white, or white tinged pink. It is a tetraploid with 52 chromosomes.



R. augustinii: painting by Carlos Reifel from "The Rhododendron" Vol. I, Edited by Leslie Urquart



Presently, there are four subspecies of *R. augustinii*

R. augustinii ssp. augustinii -

tall, bushy species with the leaf petiole fringed with hairs. wide funnel shaped flowers range from lavender-blue to mauve, pink and white, often with a blotch and/or spots. Corolla tube is lepidote.

R. augustinii ssp. chasmanthum

close to *ssp. augustinii*, but with wider leaves and mostly smooth petiole.

flowers appear later than *ssp. augustinii*, and are more widely funnel shaped. Native to the south and west of *ssp. augustinii*.

R. augustinii ssp. hardyi

deciduous foliage that emerges a bronze reddish-brown. white flowers with yellow-green spots.

R. augustinii ssp. rubrum.

formerly known as *R. bergii*

low and compact habit with dark green leaves.

leaf petiole is densely covered with strap-like and thread-like hairs.

purple-red flowers much earlier in the season than its related subspecies.

The "Encyclopedia of Rhododendron Species", Cox and Cox, suggests that *ssp. rubrum* may be deserving of specific status as *R. bergii*, although they believe it to be a natural hybrid of *R. augustinii ssp. chasmanthum* x *R. rubiginosum*

There are also a great many named forms of *R. augustinii* resulting from the efforts of collectors and hybridizers to intensify some of the hues of this marvelous species

This species has such a lovely range of colour and hue that it understandable that many botanical and large private gardens attempt to amass all of these shades within their collections of *R. augustinii*. And successfully so, you will discover, if you can manage to find your way, at this time of year, to VanDusen Gardens, UBC Botanical Garden or head down the road to the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden in Federal Way, Washington.



R. augustinii ssp.
augustinii
Wolong, Sichuan,
China

Above left: image
Sean Rafferty
Below left: image:
Brenda Macdonald



Above: *R. augustinii* ssp *augustinii*
Below: *R. augustinii* ssp *chasmanthum*



Above: *R. augustinii* ssp *hardyi*
Below: *R. augustinii* ssp. *rubrum*



Left: *R.* 'Augustine's White Lie'
unregistered, *R. augustinii* ssp *augustinii* x unknown
All images by Garth Wedemire

After a brief survey of “Rhododendron Hybrids”, by Homer E. Salley and Harold E. Greer, I had to give up counting the number of direct and indirect hybrids created, and I had only reached the D’s. I have subsequently elected to stay with the website Hirsutum, which in this instance is far more manageable, having only 26 direct and 27 indirect hybrid crosses. Below are four of many very worthy plants.

Sean Rafferty



Above: *R. 'Illam Violet'*, (*R. augustinii* ssp. *chasmanthum* x *R. augustinii* ssp. *augustinii*) x *R. russatum*. E.F. Stead, 1947



Above: *R. 'Blue Diamond'*, (*R. intricatum* x *R. fastigiatum*) x *R. augustinii* ssp. *augustinii*. J.J. Crossfield, 1939

Below: *R. 'Mood Indigo'*, *R. augustinii* ssp. *augustinii* x *unknown*. Lester E Brandt. 1960

Below: *R. 'Gletschernacht'* (*R. intricatum* x *R. fastigiatum*) x *R. russatum*. H. Hachmann, 1961



All images by Garth Wedemire

