

# The Yak

Newsletter of  
The Fraser South  
Rhododendron  
Society

Volume 26 Number 7  
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[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, October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2012

Topic: "A Passion for Propagation"

Speaker: Rosemary Prufer

Plant Sales: Harold Fearing

## 2012 Officers

President:	Brenda Macdonald	604-990-5353
Past Pres:	Bill Bischoff	604-589-6134
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Secretary:	Margaret Hodgson	604-541-2382
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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



## FROM THE PRESIDENT

named *Papaver* genus, which contains many of the beautiful garden specimens we grow: the Oriental poppy, the Opium poppy and the blood red corn poppy, *Papaver rhoeas*: the poppy of the fields of Europe now memorialized as the Remembrance Day poppy. Nor will we concentrate on the genus *Eschscholzia*, the golden California poppy - although I continue



*Eschscholzia californica*

## Notes From the Chair

Well, this is embarrassing.

I'm not sure if in the 10 years I have been a member of Fraser South I have missed a single meeting. But now that I am President, it seems that I will have missed two in a row.

I promise I will be there next time.



This month, let us consider poppies.

Papaveraceae is a large and cosmopolitan family of some 44 genera and approximately 770 species.

We will not, this time, concern ourselves with the eponymously named *Papaver* genus, which contains many of the beautiful garden specimens we grow: the Oriental poppy, the Opium poppy and the blood red corn poppy, *Papaver rhoeas*: the poppy of the fields of Europe now memorialized as the Remembrance Day poppy. Nor will we concentrate on the genus *Eschscholzia*, the golden California poppy - although I continue to have a secret empathy with a guerilla gardener I once knew who would stroll around his neighbourhood with a pocket full of California poppy seeds, scattering a few into gardens here and there just to see the lovely bits of California sun sneaking up through the utilitarian green of box hedges or relentlessly ordered juniper bushes.

*Papaver rhoeas*



Beautiful as they are, these are poppies of the sunshine, and we want to think about those that will coexist with, and compliment a woody rhododendron garden.

For this we need the genus *Meconopsis*.

There are 43 species within *Meconopsis*, all but one native to the Himalayas and western China. The outlier is of course *Meconopsis cambrica*, the Welsh poppy, originally native to England, Wales, Ireland, and the fringes of Western Europe, and whose current range includes every garden to which it was ever introduced. Sprightly, tolerant of intermittent shade, with an extraordinarily long and continuous bloom period lasting from spring to a hard frost, the blossom colour was predominantly yellow but is now available in shades ranging from orange to cream. But it also comes equipped with one of the most tenacious tap roots I have ever encountered, as well as generous seed production. Nevertheless, this is a lovely poppy, not to be dismissed simply because it is easy to grow, and despite recent studies that indicate it is not related to the other members of *Meconopsis* at all and should be lumped back with *Papaver* where it originally started out.



*Meconopsis cambrica*

The more famous, or perhaps more spectacular, members of *Meconopsis* family are the Chinese cousins. They range in colour from the red of *punicea*, through the yellow of *integrifolia* and the cream of *napaulensis*, to the blue of *betonicifolia* and *grandis*, and finally to the purple of *henrici*.

It is probably not an exaggeration to say that the blue poppies are among the most hallowed of garden plants. Difficult to grow, or at least difficult to maintain, and displaying an ethereal colour of blue not often seen in the garden, a well-grown blue poppy remains the holy grail of many a plantsman. It was originally thought that many of the blue poppies were monocarpic, that is, that they would bloom once and then die, but they are probably more accurately described as short-lived perennials.

The poppy formerly known as *baileyi*, then known as *betonicifolia*, and recently returned to *baileyi* was



*Meconopsis baileyi*

*M. baileyi* (white form)



one of the first of the “Himalayan Blue Poppies” to be brought into cultivation. Virtually indistinguishable to a casual passer-by, *Meconopsis grandis* is another of the Himalayan blues brought back to eager Victorian gardeners. Both are erect (up to 1.6 m or 5’) with large coarsely toothed leaves with a scattering of rusty bristles. Both have sky-blue flowers, sometimes touched with purple at the base. While *baileyi* is generous with its seed set, *grandis* is notoriously stingy, which is why almost all of the plants you see in a nursery labelled *grandis* are actually usually *baileyi*. Interestingly enough, for our own garden, the best of the lot is the hybrid of the two: *Meconopsis* x *sheldonii*, recently renamed as *Meconopsis* ‘Lingholm’. It seems to have a clearer, brighter, deeper blue, often with no hint of purple at the base.

*M. baileyi* showing the large cordate leaf



While the nomenclature of the blues remains a moving target at best, there appears to be some consensus on cultivation. They are good companions for the rhododendron garden, appreciating the deep loamy soil available in a woodland. They do well in dappled shade but can take a certain amount of sun as long as they remain cool. Like rhododendrons they are quite happy with fresh water running over their roots, but cannot tolerate boggy conditions. The best blues are developed under the slightly acidic environment of the woodland.

With a large contingent of gardeners as dedicated to the genus *Meconopsis* as those dedicated to the genus *Rhododendron*, there is a wealth of information available. Perhaps the cream of the lot, however is all gathered together for us at [www.meconopsis.org](http://www.meconopsis.org)

Brenda Macdonald



## FROM THE EDITOR

### This Month:

... is a grand time to wander among the treasures in your garden and consider which are worthy of reproduction; either to create abundance in the garden, insurance from catastrophe, gifts for friends or for heaping upon the FSRS raffle table.

You will be inspired and assisted in all the above by our very own Rosemary Prufer, who will speak to us this month on propagation.

Last month, Rosemary spoke at the American Rhododendron Society's Western Regional Conference in Nanaimo and was well received, and I expect she may wish to rework that lecture to accommodate the more discerning and refined audience generally found at Fraser South.

Rosemary's CV from the conference, reads:

Rosemary Prufer completed the Horticulture program at B.C. Institute of Technology in 1985. Her first job came as a custom propagator of Rhododendrons in Maple Ridge. More than twenty-five years later, the last fourteen with a company in Pitt Meadows, Rosemary, has continued to master her craft. Now semi-retired she enjoys her day's teaching others all aspects of growing. Rosemary divides her time between "The American Rhododendron Society" where she completed her term as the president of the Fraser Valley chapter and "The International Plant Propagators Society".

I look forward to her talk very much.

### Last Month:

I was pleased to relate, "Part One" of a trip to Guizhou and Guangxi, in southwestern China, taken by Brenda and me this past spring. I would like to thank you all for your questions at the conclusion of the talk. "Part Two" will arrive in due course.

On another note, it always delights me to observe how our little group, without need for impressment, applies all hands to the pumps. From set up to take down and all business in between, I am dazzled by our membership's generosity of spirit in making our meetings hum along with such good cheer. The raffle and toothsome treat tables are wondrous to clap eyes upon and, lest I get too maudlin, may it all just tarry and endure.



Many thanks to whomever donated the Italian plums to last month's raffle table which were transformed, by Brenda, into the fabulous plum and raspberry tarte pictured above.



In lieu of mulches, biddable cats often provide root protection for potted plants



THE CALENDAR:

Wednesday, October 17 7:30pm	Fraser South Rhododendron Society Rosemary Prufer, professional propagator with "A Passion for Propagation"
Thursday, October 18 7:30pm	Vancouver Rhododendron Society Elaine Sedlak, University of California (Berkeley) Botanical Garden
Wednesday, November 21 7:30pm	Fraser South Rhododendron Society Garth Wedemire "Paradise Found"
Thursday, November 22 7:30pm	Vancouver Rhododendron Society Rosemary Prufer, professional propagator with "A Passion for Propagation"

Next Month:

Garth Wedemire will offer us a presentation that will focus on five private gardens on Vancouver Island that were created to indulge the owners' passion for plants

*Sean Rafferty*



*R. spinuliferum*

image: Sean Rafferty

## The Business Stuff:

As you are aware, memberships are now due. Please bring your renewals to the next meeting.

And a reminder and follow up to the email recently sent regarding International Day at The Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden, Saturday, October 20th. There will be a US Department of Agriculture agent available to issue a Phytosanitary Certificate (\$12.00) to enable you to bring any plant purchases back to Canada. There will be many choice species rhododendrons and companion plants available for purchase, many of which are not in the catalogue. A fine opportunity to drive down and visit the garden, take in the Foliage Festival and discover the exotic species in bloom at The Rutherford Conservatory.

**Free  
Admission  
Oct. 20 - 27th**

Saturday Oct 20th

Open 10 am - 4 pm

### International Plant Sale Day

Special sales in the  
Garden Gift Shop & RSBG Nursery

Noon - 3 pm Phytosanitary inspector  
on-site for international purchasers

**Cost is just \$12 per certificate  
this day only!**

*Any other day it could cost \$50 or more!*

## Fall Foliage Festival & Plant Sale

1:00 pm - Speaker

"Best Rhodys from Around the World"  
Dennis Bottemiller

2:00 pm - Tour  
RSBG "Around the World" Tour

**One free "Garden Pass"  
with every  
\$50 purchase of plants!**

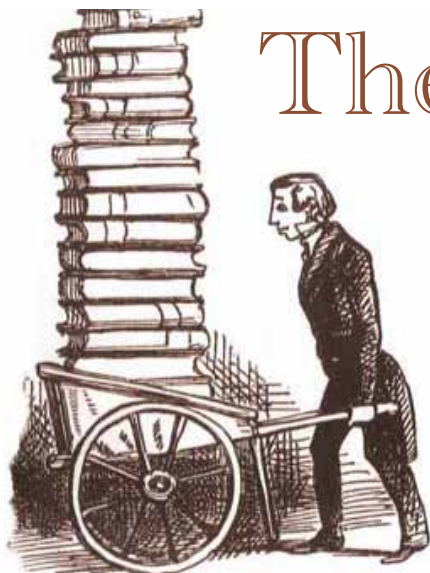


2525 S. 336<sup>th</sup> Street  
Federal Way, WA  
253-838-4646 Ext. 140  
Directions: [www.RhodyGarden.org](http://www.RhodyGarden.org)

## Other Duties as Assigned:

Lashings of tea and coffee with perhaps some corn pone and pan dowdy to keep us amply slaked, will be produced by the platoon of Arlene Darby and Ginny Fearing

*Sean Rafferty*



# The Book Cart

**Japanese Maples (Second Edition) Momiji and Kaede by J.D. Vertrees**  
189 pages, approx. 134 plates colour photos, with good descriptions of all the various cultivars. Appendices include Japanese Names and their Meanings, Cultivar Names Not Elsewhere Described, Guide to Use and Character, Bibliography and Index. Copyright 1987 Timber Press, Portland Oregon. ISBN 0-88192-048-7. \$40.00

The late J.D. Vertrees was one of the world's acknowledged authorities on Japanese maples, and his collection of rare and unusual cultivars of *Acer palmatum* made his nursery in Roseburg, Oregon, a mecca for maple enthusiasts throughout the world. This definitive book incorporates the results of his extensive research efforts in nomenclature and taxonomy, propagation, and cultivation.

His work led to several important awards, including the 1978 Special Achievement Award from the Oregon Association of Nurserymen, the 1980 Citation for Horticultural Research from the American Horticulture Society, the 1980 Thomas Roland Gold Metal from the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, and the 1981 Citation for Distinguished Horticulture Achievement from the Oregon Federation of Garden Clubs. In addition to this classic book, he wrote many articles in leading horticultural publications, and it was at his urging in 1976 that D.M. van Gelderen, P.C. de Jong, H.J. Oterdoom, and J.R.P. van Hoey Smith started their collaboration on a definitive treatment of genus *Acer* that was to result in the 1994 publication of *Maples of the World*, also published by Timber Press.

J.D. Vertrees died in Roseburg, Oregon, in 1993 at the age of 77.

Momiji and Kaede are words used by the Japanese to indicate the species and cultivars of *Acer*. Academically, the word "Kaede" is more correctly applied. However, in horticultural use both "Momiji" and "Kaede" are used. "Momiji" is applied to those maples such as *A. palmatum*, and refers to the leaves as "Little baby extends his tiny hands" - those maples which have deeply separated lobes. "Kaede" stems from the ancient language term "Kaerude" or "Kaeru" = frog or hand - the larger lobed leaves of most other maples are called "Kaede" maples.

*Japanese Maples* is organized into five chapters followed by the appendices, bibliography and index. In Chapter 1, Character and History, Vertrees gives an interesting outline of What is a Japanese Maple, Momiji and Kaede, The Character of Japanese Maples, Variegation, In Regard to Fu (dots, specks, marks on leaves), History of Japanese Cultivars, and Old Literature on Japanese Maples. Chapter 11, Taxonomy and Nomenclature, discusses the taxonomy, nomenclature, difficulties and confusions, and the subdivisions of *Acer palmatum*. Chapter 111, Culture, brings into consideration Culture in the Garden and gives practical advice of locations for Japanese maples, their use in the landscape, and their requirements to thrive. The author has described the method of planting, the soils, moisture, fertilizer needs, container growing and insect and pest problems. In Chapter IV, Propagation, Vertrees has covered many methods of propagation. Japanese Maples are produced primarily from seed and by grafting. Other methods used in a limited way include production from rooted cuttings, budding, and layering. The author gives a good description of these methods in this chapter. In Chapter V, The Cultivars Displayed, one is treated to a very good coverage of How to "Read" Cultivars, and then the chapters follows through with the Cultivars and Selections of *Acer palmatum* with accompanying pictures with the descriptions. The author has a well-organized section on the Palmate Group, Dissectum Group, Deeply Divided Group, Linearilobum Group, Dwarf Group, Semi-Dwarf Group, Variegated Group, Unusual Feature Group, New Hybrids, Cultivars and Selections of *Acer japonicum*, and Other *Acer* species from Japan. The Appendices, bibliography and index complete the text

A useful book to read.

*Margaret Hodgson*



# *R. decorum* (epithet: Ornamental)

*R. decorum* was first described by Adrien René Franchet ( French botanist at the National Museum of Natural History in Paris ) in 1886 from a plant collected in Moupin, western Sichuan in 1869. It was introduced to cultivation in 1887, by Père Jean Marie Delavay. Later introductions by Wilson, Forrest, Kingdon-Ward, Rock, McLaren, and Hu, attest to its wide distribution throughout west and south-west Sichuan, south-east Tibet, north-west Yunnan and north-east upper Burma. It grows in pine, spruce, and open deciduous forests. Also it is happy on grassy mountains, rocky scrub and tolerates dry, open situations, and is found at elevations of 5,900 to 14,900 ft.

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



*R. decorum*: painting by Carlos Reifel from "The Rhododendron" Vol. 2, Edited by Leslie Urquart

*R. decorum* grows between 3 and 50 ft. in the wild and about 15 ft. in cultivation. The foliage is variable but typically oblanceolate to elliptic, smooth green on both surfaces, with

rounded ends.

The 6 to 8-lobed openly funnel-campanulate flowers are white to pink to pale lavender, variously marked and quite fragrant. The stamens are more or less hairy at their bases. *R. decorum* shares similarities with *R. vernicosum*, which has red glands on the style and hairless stamens, and has non-fragrant, earlier-blooming flowers. It is allied with *R. diaprepes*, but is distinguished from it by having smaller leaves and corolla and fewer stamens. *R. decorum* also differs from *R. diaprepes* by growing further north and east and having an earlier-blooming time.

This species is extremely widespread and common in the wild, and as one might expect given its wide range in



elevation, is quite variable in hardiness. Most specimens in cultivation, however, are easily grown and generally bloom floriferously at an early age, and taken together with a late season bloom-time ( May/June ) and the aforementioned fine fragrance, should make it a keeper in anyone's garden.

It is little wonder that such a fine species has found considerable use with those who hybridise rhododendrons. Many fine hybrids have been produced from the early 1920's in the British Isles and Continental Europe, and continuing in Australia, New Zealand and to North America. A soupçon of which, courtesy of the website "Hirsutum", is shown below.

*Sean Rafferty*

**R. 'Alena'**

***R. decorum ssp decorum x*  
*R. 'Cunningham's White'*  
Kyndl, 1970**



**R. 'Caroline'**

***R. decorum ssp decorum x R. brachycarpum*  
*ssp brachycarpum*  
J.B. Gable 1927**



**R. 'Allissa Charlene'**

**R. 'Emily Allison' x  
R. decorum ssp decorum  
C. Weeks, 1985**



**R. 'Newcomb's Sweetheart'**

**R. 'Pink Walloper' x  
R. decorum ssp decorum  
L.L. Newcomb, 1968**



**R. 'Apricot Sherbert'**

**R. 'Comstock' x ( R. dichroanthum  
ssp dichroanthum x  
R. decorum ssp decorum )  
H.E. Greer, 1982**



**R. 'Dexter's Cream'**

***R. decorum ssp decorum* x *R. haematodes ssp haematodes*  
C.O. Dexter, 1943**



**R. 'White Swan'**

***R. decorum ssp decorum* x  
*R. 'Pink Pearl'*  
Waterer, 1958**



**R. 'September Song'**

**(*R. dichroanthum ssp dichroanthum* x  
*R. decorum ssp decorum*) x *R. 'Fawn'*  
Dr. C.E. Phetteplace, 1988**

