

The Yak

Newsletter of
The Fraser South
Rhododendron
Society

Volume 27 Number 1
January, 2013



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, January 16 2013

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

IN ADDITION TO OUR
IITH ANNUAL DESSERT EXTRAVAGANZA

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

The Fraser South, Hello Kitty, extends
her paw in a warm welcome to new
members,

Heather and Frimen Tomsic,
of Maple Ridge. We are all extremely
pleased to welcome you both aboard.



Notes From the Chair

HELLEBORES

Early January is a good season to be thinking about what might be blooming in our gardens already (well, perhaps blooming in your garden already), so hellebores it is.

Hellebores belong to the *Helleborus* genus, quite a small genus of between 15 to 20 species depending on which authority you are consulting. They are native to much of Europe, extending southward and eastward to the

Caucasus, with a couple of outliers in western China and the border between Turkey and Syria. They are members of the plant family called Ranunculaceae (and isn't that a lovely word to roll off your tongue? almost as good as my very favourite, Zingiberaceae), which includes buttercups and clematises.

For centuries they have been cultivated for their medicinal qualities, so much so that it is now difficult to know which are native populations and which are naturalized.

In recent years they have become very popular, as hybridizers develop and market an increasing number of colours and forms. Developing new hellebore cultivars has always been an exceedingly tiresome procedure. The



acaulescent forms (think herbaceous peonies) can be divided, but they resent it, and often sulk afterwards for a year or so. The caulescent forms (think tree peonies) simply cannot

be divided at all; and it seems as if no one has ever been successful at propagation through cuttings. That left propagation by seed only, which meant that hybridizers had to spend many years roguing out less desirable plants in order to get a stable seed strain that (almost always) bred true to the parents. However recently they have finally been able to perfect a tissue culture process that allows the replication of particularly attractive specimens. So we will now be able to purchase a named cultivar that should

look exactly like all the other plants of the same name.

Part of what makes hellebores so useful in the garden is their marvelously long lasting blossoms. And the reason for this remarkable persistence is that what we are looking at are not the petals, but sepals. The calyx of a hellebore flower consists of five sturdy and deeply coloured sepals, arranged somewhat ingeniously with two sepals to the back, two sepals to the front, and one sepal with one edge in front and one edge behind. The sepals, which stay behind long after the flower has been fertilized and the petals have dropped off, continue to provide colour as they age, often gradually changing from one colour to another.





Generally speaking, hellebores are deep-rooted, stout plants that do best in deep organic soil that is neutral or slightly alkaline, with generous amounts of water during their growing season. One often sees them advertised as growing happily in the shade, but shade being a relative term it probably means they grow and blossom best in the filtered shade of a high deciduous canopy, not the perpetual gloom of a dense stand of conifers. In fact with ample soil and water they will do quite nicely in full sun here in the Pacific Northwest. All in all, however, they are a most forgiving genus, and once established will tolerate almost anything.

Helleborus niger, the famous Christmas Rose, blooms anytime between November and June. It has a lovely, large (2"-5"), white, single blossom that ages gracefully to pink. It has been used extensively in hybridizing programs because it is one of the few species hellebores to have outward facing rather than nodding flowers.

Helleborus orientalis is another species plant used extensively in hybridizing, which has led to the unfortunate common usage of the term "Orientalis Hellebore" to mean any number of hellebore hybrids, whether or not they even had the *orientalis* species in their parentage.

The species itself has lovely nodding flowers of white through cream to pink, often with very attractive spotting, and blooms slightly later than *H. niger* - hence its common name, the Lenten Rose, to coincide with a bloom time closer to Easter than Christmas.

Current nomenclature uses the terms *Helleborus* Mrs. Betty Ranicar (without any quotation marks) for a particular seed strain; *Helleborus* 'Tutu' (with single quotation marks) for an actual cultivar produced through tissue culture; and *Helleborus* x hybridus for the many wonderful naturally occurring hybrids that are produced by this fairly promiscuous genus.

In fact it is the very prodigality of seed production that make hellebores such a welcome addition to the garden. Leave them on their own for just one season and you will be rewarded with dozens of seedlings popping up in the most unlikely places.

Like cyclamens, hellebores produce seeds with attached eliasomes, which are fleshy structures rich in fats and proteins, and almost irresistible to ants. The ants carry them off to use the eliasomes as a food source and then discard the rest of the seed in places it would never reach by the mechanical means of wind or water. Truthfully, I kept weeding out these funny little seedlings with the leathery seed-leaves until I finally realized what they were. Hopefully this confession will serve as a salutary lesson about the inadvisability of a squeaky clean garden bed.

Brenda Macdonald





FROM THE EDITOR

Last Month:

Was our very well attended Annual Potluck Dinner and Festive Frolic. And what great fun it was - although I am somewhat embarrassed for my long and exhaustive embrace of one of the seven deadlies: Gluttony. It just could not be helped. One needed a transcendent fortitude to withstand the fall. Our groaning board was glorious to behold and its offerings sublime. Many thanks to everyone for their effort and concern that made the gathering so thoroughly enjoyable.

And, once again, we are especially grateful to Bev and Les Clay for their labours with preparation of the fabulous turkey, and to Joan and Terry McGiveron for their endeavours in providing us with the splendid ham. It also goes without saying that the evening's organisational success was due in large part to Karen Linton and Larry Morton, continuously slaving over food,

drink and table arrangements in order that the rest of us could simply kick back and enjoy. We thank them also for the wonderful punches, A and B, one merry and the other merrier. Although, I can't remember which was which but they both seemed to work admirably well. It was certainly a grand time.

Our Christmas Potluck festivities could, of course, not be fulfilled without Colleen Bojczuk, attempting to allay our leisurely drift into early onset dementia, by introducing another one of her mind-crinkling games. This year's challenge involved matching geographical points of interest to particular rhododendron names. Lamentably, with pixilation already entrenched, I failed miserably at this exercise, but witnessed much merriment among those victorious in the trial.

Colleen had announced that this was to be the final game that she would introduce to our Christmas festivities and we shall take this opportunity to all offer her our profound gratitude for her hard work and the unmitigated fun we have received for so many years.



This Month:

is the month to wind down slowly from the often hectic pace encountered during the frenzied festive season. Not to arrive at a grinding halt, mind you, we just like to ease ourselves gently into the new year. As most of you are aware the prescriptive method adopted at Fraser South is to create one's favorite dessert and bring it along to the Annual General Meeting to share with club members who have done likewise. Of course, if one has picked up multiple dessert plates at the same time, one has to remember to put one of the dessert plates down occasionally in order to raise a hand to approve a financial report or vote approval of a new executive. Also, when a fellow club member receives an award for meritorious service, all plates are to be put down temporarily, while long, boisterous cheering and clapping takes place. In between these duties much laughter, pleasant conversation and good cheer are exchanged

This meeting is also the time when all Chapter members are invited to bring along a few pictures to show: favourite rhodos, gardens visited, horticultural projects started or completed, vacation trips enjoyed. Nothing fancy, nothing lengthy, just a few images to share with friends. So bring in a few slides (10 - 15 are just fine), or a few digital images. You can bring the digital images in your own laptop, or load them onto a CD or memory stick.

It will be a time to hang loose, postpone any resolution making until next month and joyfully reunite with good friends. Please don't forget to bring cups and plates to drink and eat from and utensils to eat with and to serve with, if necessary. Tea and coffee will be served as usual.

THE CALENDAR:

Wednesday, January 16 7:30pm	Fraser South Rhododendron Society Annual General Meeting and Dessert Extravaganza
Thursday, January 17 7:30pm	Vancouver Rhododendron Society Annual General meeting and members slides
Wednesday, February 13 7:30pm	Alpine Garden Club of BC Jackie Chambers: Alpine Plants of New Zealand
Wednesday, February 20 7:30pm	Fraser South Rhododendron Society Bill Bischoff Gentiana of Asia and Europe
Thursday, February 21 7:30pm	Vancouver Rhododendron Society Dr. Brian White, Royal Rhodes University

Next Month:

Bill Bischoff, the gentleman I consider to be the world expert on the genus cyclamen, has spread his wings (though not soaring too high from the ground) and embraced the genus gentiana. He will talk to us on the magnificent Asiatic species of gentians, and if time permits, will also enlighten us with information about their European cousins. I very much look forward to Bill's presentation, as gentians are one of my favorite species and such beautiful plants.



Other Duties as Assigned:

Manning (but mostly Womanning) the battlements for this month's Dessert Extravaganza will be the hardy crew of Bill and Carla Bischoff, Maureen and Richelle Renton and Sue Wedemire. They will need all their strenght in order to keep us plied with sufficient brew to wash down all the wondrous delights.

Francisca Darts
1916 - 2012



Vern Finley (left) and Francisca at Dart's Hill May, 2007

Francisca died peacefully in her sleep on December 26 after a lengthy illness. She was born in The Hague, Holland. As a young girl she immigrated with her family to Manitoba. She became an accomplished figure skater and later a champion curler. Music and sheep dogs were also a large part of her life. But her real passion was the 7.5 acres in South Surrey, B.C. that she and her husband Edwin (Ed) purchased in 1943. Here they cleared massive stumps and logs, planted fruit and nut trees, and built their home. An entry from the orchard won Ed the only gold medal ever awarded by the Pacific National Exhibition in that exhibit category. The orchard gradually evolved into the Darts Hill Garden of today. This superb garden is the result of sixty years of hard work, vision, and dedication. In 1995 she and Ed gave Dartshill to the City of Surrey as a garden park. Francisca gave major support and encouragement to local gardening enthusiasts and clubs, particularly the Darts Hill Garden Volunteers, a group that have captured her spirit and now help perpetuate her memory in the Garden. She was an active supporter of the South Surrey Garden Club and the Fraser South Rhododendron Society. For many years Francisca was an ardent supporter of the Alpine Garden Club of British Columbia in which she served as a president, and several times as show chairman. She was a Life Member. Francisca was equally supportive of the Vancouver Rhododendron Society, also serving with it as a president and show chairman. She was awarded an American Rhododendron Society Bronze Medal. She was also a long-time member of the University of British Columbia Botanical Garden Friends of the Garden. In 2002 Francisca Darts was the recipient of an Honorary Doctor of Laws degree from Kwantlen University College in recognition of her contribution to local and world horticulture. Francisca will be remembered as one of Canada's great talented plants women. Predeceased by her husband Edwin and sister Nettie Harman, she is survived by her sister Louise Emmonds. Condolences may be offered at www.victoryfuneralcentre.ca

Incredible Edibles

As requested by one of our readers, here are two very tasty, gluten-free recipes from last month's fabulous Festive Frolic. Should anyone else have any recipe requests needed to fulfill their lives, please let me know. I shall accept all requests; either from that marvelous Christmastide event or the forthcoming and much anticipated Dessert Extravaganza. Please let me know and I shall do my utmost to have them published in the February edition of 'The Yak'.

Clementine Cake

(From Margaret Hodgson)

Ingredients: 4 – 5 unpeeled clementines (about 1 lb. total weight)
6 eggs
1 cup plus 2 tbsp. sugar
2 1/3 cup ground almonds
1 heaping tsp. baking powder

1. Put the unpeeled clementines in a pot with cold water to cover, bring to the boil, and cook for 2 hours.
2. Drain and, when cool, cut each clementine in half and remove the seeds.
3. Then chop everything finely—skins, pith, fruit—in the food processor (or by hand). Preheat oven to 375 F. Butter and line an 8" spring form pan.
4. Beat the eggs. Add the sugar, almonds, and baking powder. Mix well, adding the chopped clementines. Don't use the processor for this.
5. Pour the cake mixture into the prepared pan and bake for a hour, when a skewer will come out clean; you'll probably have to cover the cake with foil after about 40 minutes to stop the top burning.
6. Remove from the oven and leave to cool on a rack, but in the pan. When the cake's cold, you can take it out of the pan. Tastes even better the day after it's made.

Variation: You can make this with an equal weight of oranges and lemons, in which case, increase the sugar to 1 1/4 cups. You can slightly anglicize it too, by adding a glaze made of confectioners' sugar mixed to a paste with lemon juice and a little water.

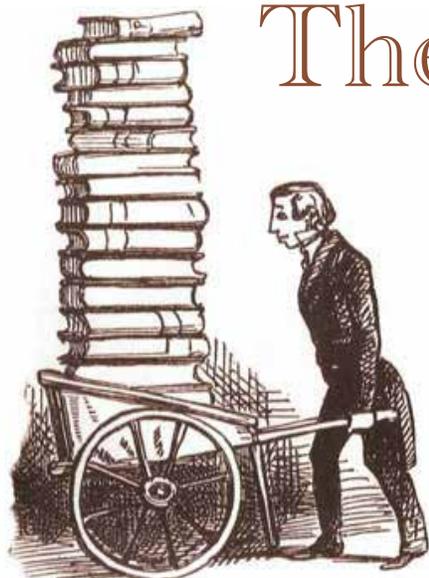
Chocolate Orange Cake à la Nigella Lawson

(Gluten-free, dairy free, calorie free?? and easy!)

2 small or 1 large thin skinned orange 1/2 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
6 eggs 200 grams ground almonds (about 3/4 cup)
1 heaped teaspoon baking powder 50 grams (1/4 cup) cocoa
250 grams sugar
orange peel or berries, and chocolate sauce for topping

Put a whole orange in cold water and bring to the boil. Cook for two hours until soft (I cook it in microwave about ten minutes until it is very soft). Let cool. Cut in half and remove any pips. Pulp everything, skin and all in a food blender along with all ingredients. Bake at 350F for one hour in a 20 cm springform pan. Let cake cool in the pan before taking it out. Add topping and sauce.

Enjoy! Margaret

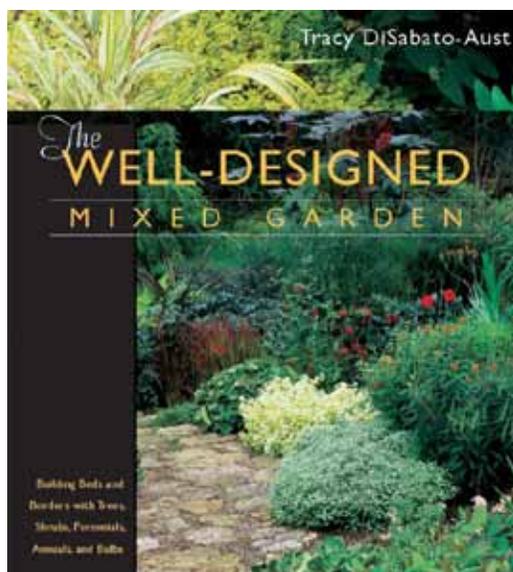


The Book Cart

The Well-Designed Mixed Garden by Tracy DiSabato-Aust.
460 pages, more than 250 colour photos and illustrations, Appendix A – Scientific and Common Names, Appendix B – Plants by Design Characteristics, Appendix C – Plants by Maintenance Characteristics, Hardiness Zone Map, Metric Conversion Chart, Glossary, Bibliography, Sources, Index. Hardbound, Copyright 2003, Published by Timber Press, Inc., Portland, Oregon, USA.
ISBN -13: 978-0-88192-559-3 (hardcover) \$36.26 + tax Cdn. (Chapters)

Tracy DiSabato-Aust has earned international acclaim as one of America's most entertaining and knowledgeable garden writers and speakers. Her experience includes stints at Longwood Gardens in the U.S.A., the Montreal Botanical Garden in Canada, the Kalmthout Arboretum in Belgium, and Knightshayes Court in England. She is the author of *The Well-Tended Perennial Garden*, also published by Timber Press, of which we have a copy in the library.

A dynamic speaker, Tracy is a frequent guest on national television and radio gardening shows in the U.S.A., and is in great demand nationally and internationally on the lecture circuit. Her speaking venues have included England's Royal Horticultural Society Garden, Wisely; the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew; the English Gardening School; The University of Oxford Botanic Garden; the Smithsonian Institution; The Perennial Plant Association; and numerous other botanical gardens and professional association meetings.



As the title reflects, *The Well-Designed Mixed Garden - Building Beds and Borders with Trees, Shrubs, Perennials, Annuals, and Bulbs*, is written for gardeners who are passionate about plants of all kinds. The author, a master designer and plantswoman, provides the gardener with organized information on design and connoisseur plants, all from original research dating back to her degree work in horticulture. She tackles the design of a garden from the fundamental topics of site evaluation, colour theory, and planning for maintenance. The book includes detailed design plans that show how ideas are put onto paper and then translated into three dimensions. She has included beautifully painted examples of award-winning designs of gardens of all sizes, all of which are accompanied by lists of each plant used and photographs of "before" and "after". The book includes an "Encyclopedia of Plant Combinations", a description of each grouping, what makes the grouping work and how to keep the combination looking its best. The book finishes with exhaustive research on the lifetime care needed for plants featured in the book.

The book is divided into three main sections with Part One covering, in seven chapters, all the design basics of a mixed garden such as first steps in the design process, colour, texture and form, design principles, drawing the design, art in a design garden and maintaining the mixed garden. Part Two includes two chapters, the first on small and medium gardens and the second chapter on large gardens. Part Three is devoted to the Encyclopedia of Plant Combinations as mentioned previously.

Margaret Hodgson

R. souliei (epithet: after Père Jean André Soulié 1858-1905)

The French missionary and physician, Père J. A. Soulié, discovered the rhododendron that bears his name in July, 1893, in the vicinity of Tatsienlu, western Sichuan. Also a skilled botanist and inveterate collector of plants, Soulié, had sent more than seven thousand dried specimens to Paris from the Tibetan frontier. He was much loved by the local people and remarkably fluent in all their various dialects.

In 1905, an unstable political situation in Tibet was exacerbated by a **British military expedition** which, having massacred 600 Tibetan Monks

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



R. souliei: painting by Carlos Reifel from "The Rhododendron" Vol. 1, Edited by Leslie Urquart,

en route, forced its way into the Tibetan holy city of Lhasa. Justifiably inflamed, the Tibetan monks sought to drive out all *gui lao* (White Devils) from their territory. Soulié had been urged by his colleagues to leave his Mission station at Yaregong on the Tibetan border, but delayed his departure in order to sort and pack his botanical collections. Sadly, he was taken prisoner and tortured with increasing cruelty for fifteen long days and nights until he was mercifully shot.



R. souliei
image: Garth Wedemire



R. souliei, Zheduoshan, Sichuan, China
image: Brenda Macdonald

The above is probably more information than one may wish, but it does bring home how arduous life in the field often was for those adventurers whose risk taking enriched our gardens and our souls.

Rhododendron souliei is contained within Subsection Campylocarpa, whose general description is of small shrubs or trees with rounded smooth leaves, white to pink or yellow bell or saucer shaped flowers having five lobes, no nectar pouches and a stipitate-glandular ovary.

It grows in west and southwestern Sichuan in thickets and woodlands, in oak and spruce forests, and among boulders, at elevations of 9,850-14,900 ft.

R. souliei has ovate to oblong-elliptic or almost orbicular leaves that are quite glaucous blue-green when young. The openly cup or saucer-shaped flowers are pink to white or white flushed pink, with a very striking calyx, evident in the image below. The style is glandular to its tip. It is closely related to *R. wardii* which differs in its yellow flowers. I have occasionally heard *R. souliei* erroneously referred to as a pink *R. wardii*. *R. souliei* is very difficult to propagate from cuttings and also rather demanding to grow on well. It is good in the woodland garden or light shade and requires excellent drainage and a cool climate. It is best to treat both *R. souliei* and its cousin *R. wardii* as if they were alpine plants.



H. H. Davidian, in “The Rhododendron Species Volume 111”, honours *Rhododendron souliei* as “undoubtedly one of the finest rhododendrons in cultivation. It is free-flowering, and of exquisite beauty...” It is indeed free-flowering and also flowers at an early age, as the first plants grown at Kew Gardens in 1909, flowered when they were only four years old. *R. souliei* has been known to bloom from seed after two or three years. Such early blooming appears to have found immediate favour with the hybridising community, as I note that hybrids began to arrive as early as 1916 with the E. J. P. Magor grex, R. ‘Soulbut Group’ (*R. souliei* x *R. fortunei* ssp *fortunei* ‘Sir Charles Butler’). Since that time, *R. souliei*, has been utilised extensively in hybridising throughout the British Isles, Europe and up and down the west coast of North America. Homer Salley’s “Rhododendron Hybrids Third Edition” lists 194 *R. souliei* hybrids, both direct and indirect. Please find a small sampling below.

Sean Rafferty

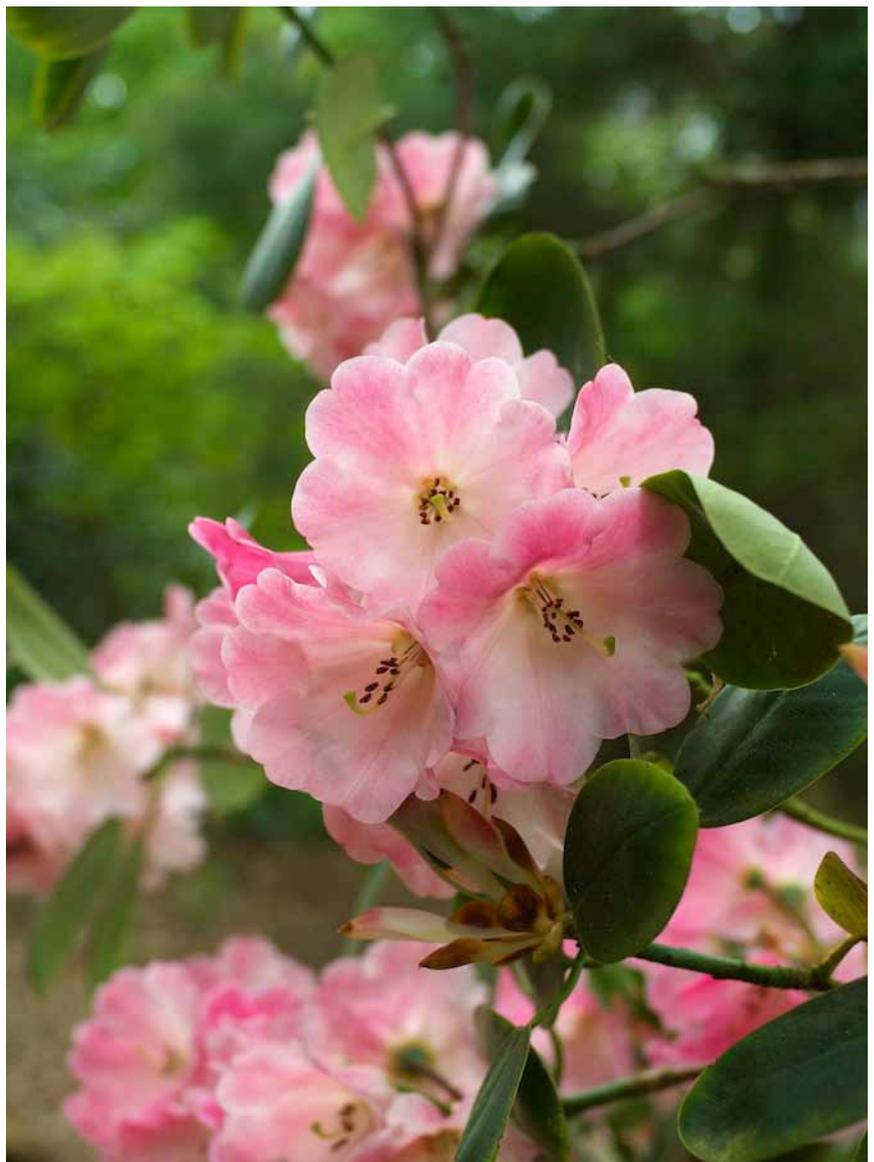
R. 'Queens Wood'

***R. souliei* x *R. aberconwayi*
1972
Crown Estate Commissioners**



R. 'Thomasine'

***R. souliei* x *R. thomsonii* ssp
thomsonii
1931
S. R. Clarke**



all images courtesy: hirsutum.info

R. 'Arthur Stevens'

R. *souliei* x R. 'Coronation Day'
1967
J. J. Crossfield



R. 'Vanessa Pastel'

R. 'Soulbut Group' x
R. *griersonianum*
1930
Lord Aberconway



R. 'Snow Cap'

**R. *souliei* x R. 'Loderi White Diamond' x
R. *williamsianum*
1957
William E. Whitney**



R. 'Vanessa'

**R. 'Soulbut Group' x R. *griersonianum*
1924
Lord Aberconway**





Above: R. 'Hotei'

***R. 'Goldsworth Orange' x (R. souliei x
R. wardii var wardii)***

1968

Karl I. Sifferman

Below: R. 'Mrs. Lamont Copeland'

R. wardii var wardii x R. 'Virginia Scott'

1971

H. L.. Larson.



2013 CVRS Tour to Washington State May 9 to 11



The Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society is again hosting a great tour this spring heading south on a three day-two night visit to seven spectacular gardens in BC and northern Washington State on Whidbey and Bainbridge Islands and sites in and around Seattle.

We leave Duncan Thursday morning at 8 am and head to the Saanich Peninsula where Evelyn Weesjes hosts us at her amazing 9 acre jewel - Towner Crest garden overlooking Towner Bay. Her garden well reflects her contributions to rhododendron culture.

We then board the Washington State Ferry at Sidney and take a leisurely cruise through the southern Gulf Islands to Anacortes. We proceed to Whidbey Island where our first stop is the Coupeville garden of Dave and Linda Dickerson. With more than 200 tons of special exotic and local rock hardscaping on their 1 acre plot, the garden now has more than 900 rhodos and beautiful annuals. Overnight is in the Coachman Inn in Oak Harbour with a short presentation from local garden experts after dinner.

Next morning we visit the famous rhodo breeder Frank Fujioka and his fantastic oceanside garden with many rare and unique rhodos, then the Meerkerk Rhododendron gardens-a paradise created by Ann and Max Meerkerk. There are fifty three acres of inspirational woodland gardens and a forest preserve offering over 5 miles of trails enabling us to breathe in the serene beauty and nature.

After lunch we take a ferries from Clinton to Mukilteo then Kingston to Edmonds and a drive over the causeway to Bainbridge Island and the famous Bloedel Gardens. These 150 acres are a unique blend of natural woodlands and beautifully landscaped gardens, including a Japanese Garden by renowned landscaper Fujitaro Kubota, a Moss Garden, a Reflection Pool and the Bloedels' former estate home. Our final ferry of the day is to Seattle where we spend the night in the heart of downtown. The evening is free for shopping, dining and sightseeing.

Saturday morning we visit the Kubota Gardens, a legacy to its founder Fujitaro Kubota who in 1927 bought two hectares of logged off swampland in Seattle and started his Rainier Beach garden. Another 7 ha were added in 1981 and the City of Seattle acquired the Kubota garden in 1987. This unique urban refuge displays over 80 years of effort including 400 tons of stone placed to create waterfalls, reflection pools and habitat for the thousands of plants this landscaper worked with throughout his long life. Our final garden visit is to the renowned Rhododendron Species Foundation in Federal Way, south Seattle. They have 10 hectares of splendid botanical gardens and one of the largest collections of species rhododendrons and azaleas in the world.

After a shopping and supper stop at the Bellis Fair mall in Bellingham, we travel north to the Tsawwassen ferry terminal to catch the last ferry, arriving in Duncan around 11:30 pm.

The all-inclusive cost of the tour is \$500 per person (double occupancy) or \$ 635 (single occupancy). A **\$200 deposit** is required to confirm your seat. The price includes:

- 3 days of travel in a deluxe highway coach
- All ferry fares, gratuities and taxes
- All meals except suppers on Friday and Saturday nights
- Morning snacks/soft drinks and bottled water
- 2 nights' accommodation--Oak Harbour and downtown Seattle

You will need a valid passport for this trip. **Nobody gets on the bus in Duncan without a passport.** We also recommend you purchase travel medical insurance for your visit to the USA. Participants should be in good physical condition but the sites are mostly well accessible.

Final payment is due April 15, 2013.