



This Month's Meeting

Date: Wednesday, May 21st, 2014 @ 7:00 pm

The Fraser South Justly Famous Beer Bottle Truss Show

2014 Officers

President:	Chris Hodgson	604-541-2382
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<http://frasersouthrhodos.ca/>

Fraser South Rhododendron Society
a chapter of the
American Rhododendron Society

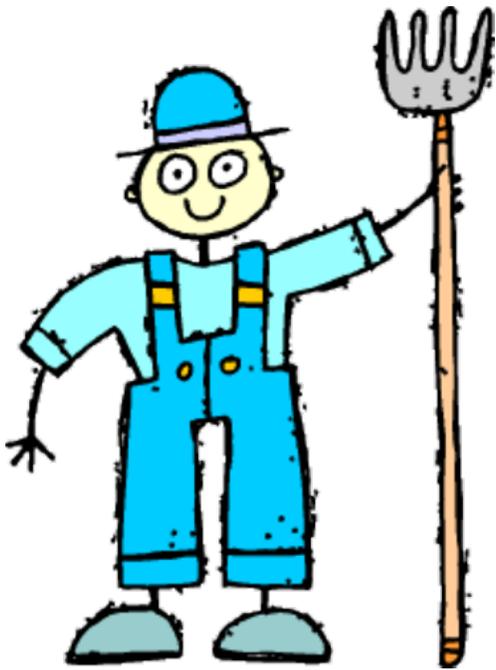
Meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. on the
third Wednesday of each month
(except June, July and August) at:
United Church Hall
5673 - 200th Street
Langley BC



Quick Hits

This month is the time in which we dust the cobwebs from our favorite beer containers, or extract the contents from some new ones, in order to carry the glory of our gardens to the Fraser South Justly Famous Beer Bottle Truss show. We shall start earlier, at 7:00 pm, in order to fill out our entry cards. Bring one truss or bring boodles as there are many categories available to enter and they are all listed inside on page 7. Beer bottles are the favoured display vessels of choice, but some displays may require something either larger or smaller to better hold the truss. There are no demerits for alternative vases.





President's Remarks

Well, our annual April plant sale is now almost a distant memory, as is that most enjoyable visit to Erica Nurseries in Pitt Meadows the day following.

Many thanks to all who lent a helping hand at the plant sale, in setting up and tearing down, assisting customers, and especially to those running the cash tent. Treasurer Harold Fearing reports that the books



At Erica Nurseries, April 20

balanced to within \$1.00. Well done! On the other hand, profits were down somewhat this year, due in part to that squall just after lunch that blew over the cashiers' tent, sent customers scurrying, and prematurely ended to the sale.



Dalen (kneeling), Lori and gang, May 3

Thanks also to Kirsten and Rose for leading a most enjoyable tour through Erica Nurseries and for providing coffee and munchies afterwards in such an elegant setting. We were impressed by the immaculate state of the nursery, the wide range of species and cultivars and those exotic blue egg-producing chickens!

The Fearings held another successful open house later in April with Sue and Les also participating.

A number of us attended Dalen and Lori Bayes' open house in Whatcom County in early May. Iffy weather, but a beautiful and memorable garden tour all the same. Thank you Dalen from the bottom of our hearts for all you have done over the years to enrich our lives.

So what's up next? John and Gael Dodd are opening their garden to us on Sunday, May 18th, 10:00am-4:00pm at 24365-61 Street in Langley. It's a superb, mature garden

and always a delight to visit.

The incomparable and justly famous FSRS Beer Bottle Truss Show is coming up at our regular meeting on May 21st. Our esteemed editor offers some helpful advice on truss presentation elsewhere in this YAK. However, I'm sure the thought that's on many of our minds is, "will we have any trusses at all after that hot spell in late April?" This year we have introduced a new "Bridesmaid" category for those who have never won a prize. So no more excuses for not participating. And guests are most welcome!

Finally, our annual picnic will be held on Saturday, June 7th at the home of Karen Linton and Larry Morton, 8219-197th Street, Langley. The key things you need to know are: it starts at 1:00pm; it will be a true potluck, and with fingers crossed we'll end up with a reasonable mix of appies, salads, mains and desserts. Please bring lots of nice plants and garden articles for the auction. This event, in addition to being a great social, raises a good part of the funds needed to pay for next year's speakers. Reckless bidding is totally acceptable, as are cheques, plastic and good old fashioned greenbacks.

Chris Hodgson



FROM THE EDITOR

Last Month:

Rosemary Pruffer presented us with a view of plant production that many of us had never before visualised. During her visit to Portland last year to attend the Convention of the International Plant Propagators she toured several plant propagation companies carrying on business there. This was plant production on a massive industrial scale using tissue culture in an incredibly technical factory environment. Mention was made that there were well over one hundred companies in the Portland area alone producing a variety of plants in this fashion. While these companies are able to produce an incredible number of plants in a very short time, it did give one pause to consider what the future might be for the smaller, boutique propagator.

This Month:

is the much anticipated Fraser South Justly Famous Beer Bottle Truss Show. Entry to the extravaganza is one truss. It doesn't necessarily have to be a rhododendron, just something that pleases you or that you think might please someone else. The President has already mentioned the new Bridesmaid Category, for those that may not have previously received a prize. The other seemingly ever-expanding categories are listed on page seven. Bring in boodles of trusses and attempt to enter as many categories as possible and fill the hall with bloom. As you probably all know, the trusses from the top of your plants are always the showiest, stand more erectly in the beer bottle vase, and are more likely to solicit votes.

Next month:

Our Annual Pot Luck Picnic and Auction will, once again be held at the lovely estate of Karen Linton and Larry Morton. The date is June 7th. any time after 2:00 pm. This year there will be no phone calls asking you what kind of delicious dish that you wish to bring. In the true tradition of a Pot Luck Picnic just bring along your party piece and we shall all have a wonderful time. True Fraser Southians like to live on the edge. You will be reminded again later this month in the Picnic edition of *The Yak*.

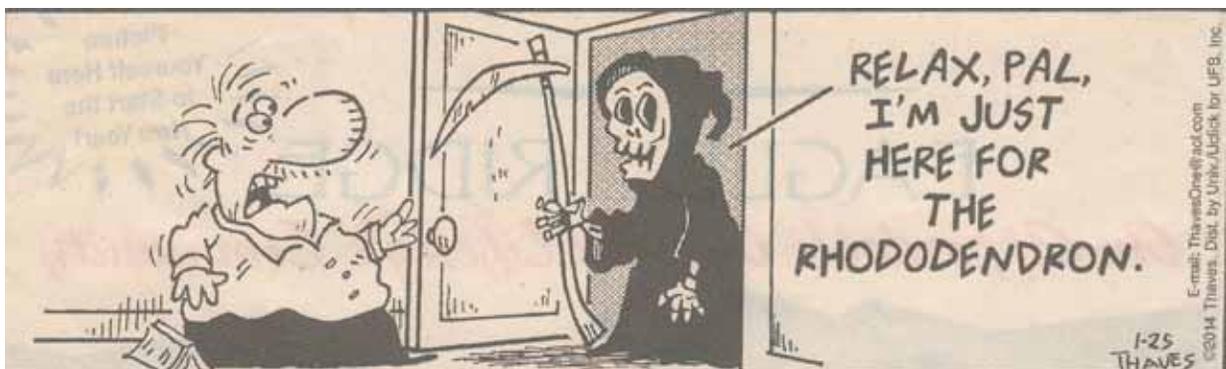
Other Duties as Assigned:

Sandra Short and Evelyn Jensen will be manning the teapots and serving us our calories this month. There will doubtlessly be much ruminating and decision making at this meeting, necessarily exacerbating the need for food and drink. Please help out these fine ladies with contributions to this month's festival of fun.

Sadly there will be no room for the raffle table this month, however, put your raffle money in a jar and save it for the auction at Karen and Larry's next month where there will fabulous deals galore.

Sean Rafferty

From the desk of Ginny Fearing. Recognisable to one and all



THE CALENDAR:

Sunday, May 18 2:00 pm	Vancouver Rhododendron Society A Walk in the Park, Dart's Hill, Surrey (16th. Avenue & 170th. Street)
Sunday, May 18 10:00 am -4 :00 pm	John and Gael Dodd Open Garden. A gorgeous, must-see garden. 24365-61 St, Langley
Wednesday, May 21 7:30 pm	Fraser South Rhododendron Society The Fraser South Justly Famous Beer Bottle Truss Show
Saturday, June 7 Any time after 1:00 pm	Fraser South Annual Picnic and Auction. At the Linton/Morton Estate
Wednesday, June 11 7:30 pm, Van Dusen	Alpine Garden Club of BC Kenton Seth: Caucasus and Crevices; from Georgia to the Garden
Sunday, June 15 2:00 & 3:00 pm	VRS Annual Picnic: Erica Enterprises Nursery, 14021 Rippington Road, Pitt Meadows. 2:00 pm to purchase plants. Picnic at 3:00 pm





The world famous Fraser South Beer Bottle Truss Show will be held at our May meeting, Wednesday, May 21st. This is a fun event in which everyone can participate.

Please note that a new category this year will be, **Bridesmaid Class**, for those who have never previously won a prize. **Also new:**

participants may enter more than one truss per category if they wish.

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, including bonsai
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 and too-tasty 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.
7. All entries to be rhododendrons (not azaleas) unless otherwise specifically noted.

Division I

Species Classes

- Class 1. Sub-genus 'Rhododendron' (lepidotes)
- Class 2. Azalea (deciduous and evergreen)
- Class 3. Sub-genus 'Hymenantes' (lepidotes)

Division II

Hybrid Classes

- Class 4. Any lepidote hybrid
- Class 5. Any deciduous azalea hybrid
- Class 6. Any evergreen azalea hybrid

Colour Classes (rhododendrons only)

- 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 11a: Mauve & Purple (small)
- 11b: Mauve & Purple (large)
- 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 16a: Best Blotched (small)
- 16b: Best Blotched (large)
- 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 23a: Best Miniature - under 6" (species)
- 23b: Best Miniature - under 6" (hybrid)
- Class 24a: Most Fragrant - Rhododendron
- 24b: Most Fragrant - Azalea
- Class 25: Bridesmaid

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'

Worthy of Repetition

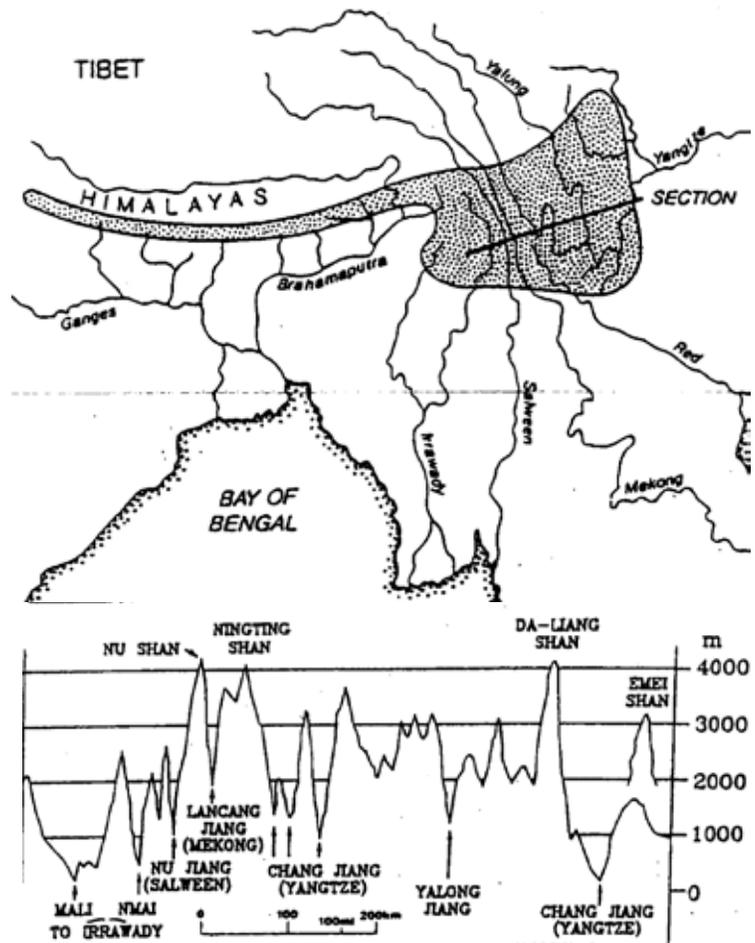
Drainage is everything for you, for me, and for our rhododendrons. You can ask any medical practitioner or experienced gardener and they will inform you that, without proper drainage, neither our rhododendrons nor ourselves will thrive and find happiness. Poor drainage may not kill us or our favorite plants in the short term but, if not dealt with, you may rest assured that the long term prognosis includes disease, misery, pain and expense, and leads to the inevitable, final twitch.

In order to provide the best conditions for your plants in cultivation, look to their circumstances in the wild and do your utmost to replicate that environment. There will be differences in habitat among various species of rhododendrons in the wild, and those habitats are often influenced by their geographic location. Different mountain ranges and valleys of varying elevations are home to different species. Speciation is influenced by isolation, time and geography and rhododendrons have taken 50 million years, or more, to settle nicely into their present homes in the wild.

Below, I have extracted some of the salient points from an article entitled *Concerning the Origin and Distribution of Rhododendrons*, by Ted Irving and Richard Hebda, both of Victoria and presenters of their fascinating paper at the 1989 ARS Conference in Victoria. It is [reproduced here](#) and it should be essential reading for all.

While rhododendrons circle the globe, the greatest number occur in the pot-shaped area along the southern Himalaya extending east into southwestern China. The pot is represented by the shaded area in the diagram to the right. This is a region which includes parts of Nepal, northeastern India, northeastern Burma, southeast Tibet, western Sichuan and northwestern Yunnan, and consists of high, steep-sided mountain ranges separated by deep valleys. This area is called the area of extreme relief and is the result of a long, relentless collision of India with Asia beginning about 40 million years ago, which doubled up the earth's crust to form the Tibetan Plateau. The debris pile from this collision formed the Himalaya. This huge landmass of the Tibetan Plateau and Asia profoundly affects the regional climate. An area of very low atmospheric pressure stretching from Pakistan to Mongolia develops in summer, drawing wet tropical air from the equator and causing heavy rainfall across the border of southeastern Tibet and the Himalaya. These monsoon rains, constant from May to October, have created great river systems with many tributaries, carving incredibly deep valleys throughout Tibet and the various mountain ranges that make up the vast Himalayan range. The vegetation growing in these mountains and valleys is rained upon almost daily in summer by these monsoons.

Almost two thirds of all rhododendrons grow in the area of extreme relief and almost one third of the genus (*Vireya* rhododendrons) is found in the high, mountainous island archipelago (Malaysia) between Asia and Australia. The rest, comparatively few, are scattered through the mountains of Thailand, Vietnam, Malaya, Korea, Japan, southern Europe in the Caucasus Mountains, northeastern Turkey, eastern and western North America and circumpolar across the sub-arctic zone.

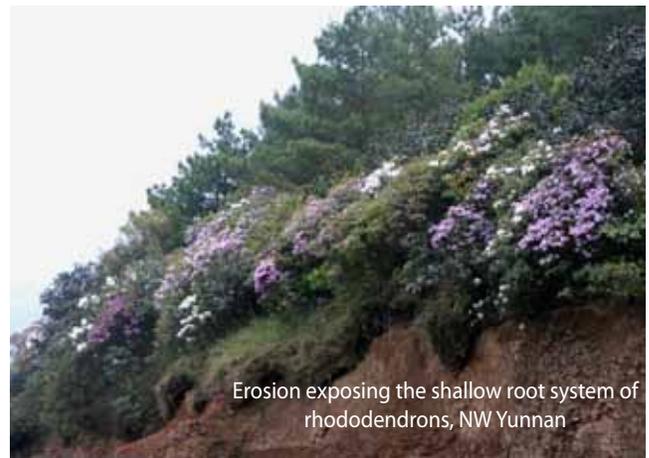


The region of extreme relief and heavy rainfall (stippled in upper diagram). The cross-section below it is along the section line in the upper diagram. The lower diagram represents the valleys carved by some of the important rivers of China. Emeishan, in Sichuan, with its numerous rhododendron species, is a little north of the line of section.

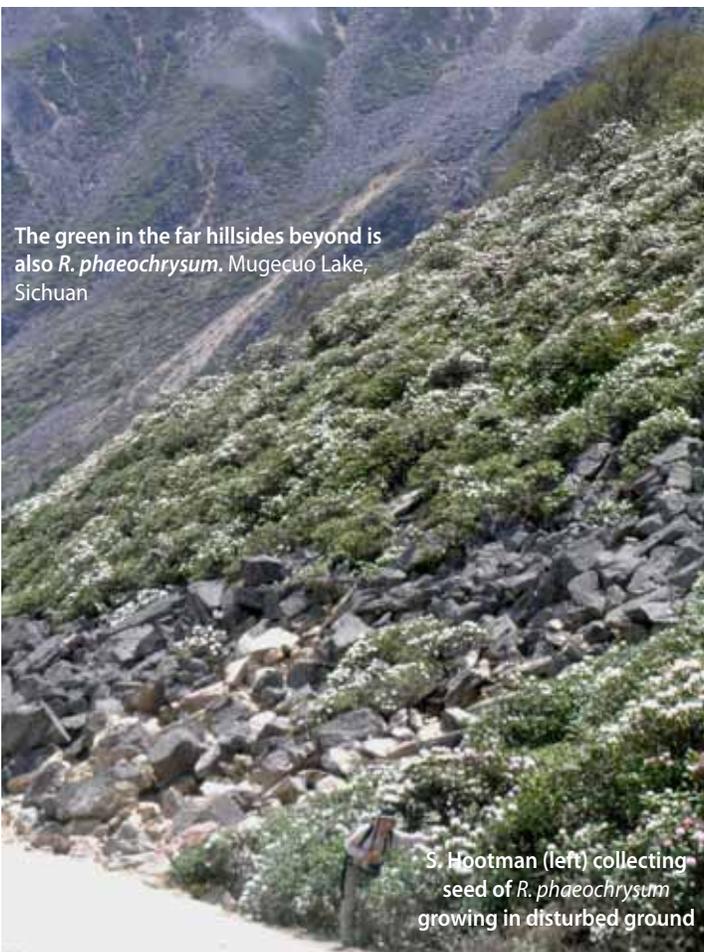
Rhododendrons are absent or rare in deserts, grasslands, boreal forests, or tundra, except for *R. lapponicum* and the eight former members of the genus *Ledum* that are now classified within the genus *Rhododendron*, which have adapted to arctic and alpine regions.



R. phaeochryseum growing happily on a mossy rock. Mugecuo lake, Sichuan



Erosion exposing the shallow root system of rhododendrons, NW Yunnan



The green in the far hillsides beyond is also *R. phaeochrysum*. Mugecuo Lake, Sichuan

S. Hootman (left) collecting seed of *R. phaeochrysum* growing in disturbed ground

The important message that we should embrace from the above information, is that almost all rhododendrons primarily grow in temperate to alpine, very moist climates, on well drained, steep, mountainous hillsides and steep valleys. These areas have generally very moist to extraordinarily wet summers and dry winters.

The habitat in which rhododendrons grow in the wild also determines their drainage requirements in cultivation. In their wild habitat, rhododendrons grow in forests on steep mountainsides, in scree, on mossy rocks, and epiphytically in the crotches of tree snags or on rotten logs. These are the habitats they love best. They are a pioneering species which are one of the first to populate disturbed ground, and disturbances, through landslides and tremors, are frequent throughout the ever-shifting mountain ranges of the Himalaya.

The **monsoon winds**, which from the end of May to the beginning of October, are responsible for incredible amounts of rainfall to be deposited on the mountainous habitat of rhododendrons. This constant rain keeps the rhododendron roots bathed with moisture throughout the summer months; moisture, which due to the terrain that rhododendrons inhabit, flows constantly and refreshingly over their roots, free from the suffocation of standing water.

Unfortunately, here in the Pacific Northwest, we have the opposite weather pattern to that experienced in the rhododendron growing regions of Asia. Our summers are generally dry and our winters are fairly

wet and create certain challenges to replicating the Himalaya in our back garden. However, if we first address the issue of drainage we are able to adapt a work around.

Rhododendron roots are shallow and close to the surface and if planted too deeply will suffocate and ultimately die. Plant them high, on well-draining, even gravelly, soil or on a hillside if possible. Do not plant deeply or in clay or heavy soils. If you have clay amend it with organic material and plant on top with additional organic material surrounding the plant. Ensure that you have excellent drainage for you plants, and in the summer months, water, water, and then water again.

Sean Rafferty

In bloom at the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden 50th Anniversary Celebration



R. roxieanum

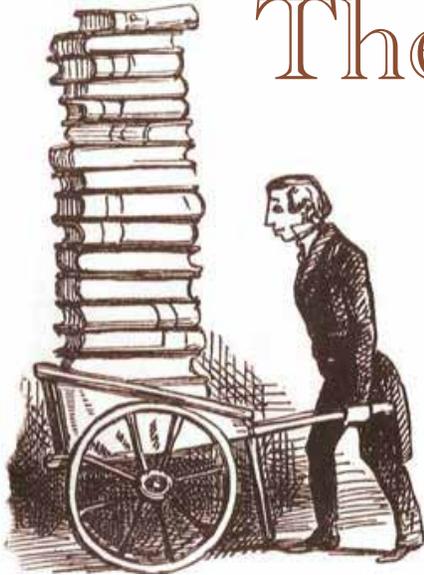


R. wiltonii



R. huianum

The Book Cart



Pocket Guide to Rhododendron Species (based on the descriptions by H.H. Davidian) by J.F.J. McGuire and M.L.A. Robinson © 2009 the Board of Trustees of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Richmond, Surrey, U.K. Cambrian Printers Ltd.

© Photographs J.F.L. McGuire and as stated in captions.

692 pages, approx. 355 pages with colour photos. Glossary, Flower Shapes, Leaf Shapes, Collector Abbreviations, Bibliography and Internet Resources, Index of Plant Names, Hardbound.

ISBN 978 1 84246 148 8 (hardcover)

A new book to our library, *Pocket Guide to Rhododendron Species* (based on the descriptions by H.H. Davidian) is one of those books which many rhododendron enthusiasts also have in their own personal

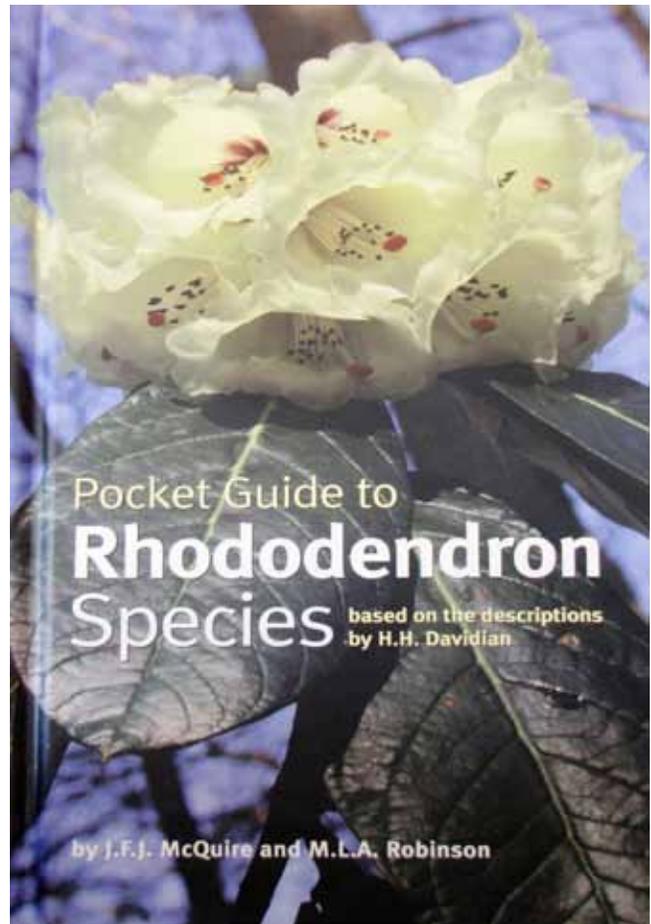
collection, as it has to be one of the most useful guides to rhododendron species available. I was delighted to find that the FSRS library has acquired this book. I had been using our own copy at home to check out the many species recommended by Dennis Bottemiller, in his talk of *Species Rhododendrons for Gardens of the Pacific Northwest*.

J.E.L. McGuire and M.L.A. Robinson have worked together to write this book, based on the abbreviated text of *Rhododendron Species* by H.H. Davidian. The larger part of the photographs were done by McGuire with contributions from others, all of whom are acknowledged.

This guide has been developed to assist in the recognition and identification of species rhododendrons that have been fully described and are currently in cultivation. Places of origin are included, diagrams are clear, and more importantly, the photographs are exceptional in quality. At the beginning of the book, a very good description is given for the key to species descriptions.

Many of the photographs will give additional information such as the following: "Principal defining characteristics - similar to R., but with narrower, often recurved leaves. In cultivation, it is later flowering ..." etc. The photographs also include one leaf turned over to show the indumentum, and McGuire has included many photographs of leaves in subsection groupings to show the variations with the indumentums.

The *Pocket Guide to Rhododendron Species* is well organized. The standard description of the species rhododendron is on the left side page, and the corresponding photograph is on the right side page. In a single description, a wealth of information is given to the reader, such as whether it is a shrub or tree, its size (height), details of branchlets, details of leaves including upper surface and underside, petiole, inflorescence in trusses, details of corolla, hardiness, origin, and any additional details. This is a most useful book to read and one of the best on species rhododendrons.



Margaret Hodgson

Rhododendron russatum

(Epithet: Reddened)

First collected by [George Forrest](#) in 1917 on the Kari Pass, northwest Yunnan, *R. russatum* is one of the most outstanding species of Subsection Laponica and a wonderful plant for the alpine or rock garden.

It is found at elevations between 11,000-14,000 feet in north and northwest Yunnan and southwest Sichuan, in alpine pasture and forest margins. Its leaves are oval, oblong-oval to oblong-lanceolate. They are rusty green in varying degrees, densely scaly on both surfaces, and 3/4-1 3/4 inches long and 3/8-7/8 inches wide. The corolla is broadly funnel-shaped, 1/2- 3/4 inch long and is variously deep to medium indigo-blue, deep to medium reddish-purple or pinkish lavender. The colours are very bright and

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



R. russatum

Illustration by Valerie Price
Curtis's Botanical Magazine



R. russatum
image: hirsutum.info



R. russatum
image: hirsutum.info

appear to glow. The calyx is 1/4 inch long and greenish, pink, reddish or crimson purple and often contrasts nicely to its corolla. *R. russatum* is a rather variable plant. It is an upright, compact rounded, cushion, semi-prostrate or straggly shrub growing from six inches to five feet high. It is also tetraploid with 52 chromosomes.

R. russatum's closest relative, with which it readily hybridises in the wild, is *R. rupicola*, but *R. russatum* is distinguished by its wider leaves, pubescent style, the non-lepidote corolla and the long hairs on the calyx margins.

The best forms of this hardy dwarf produce a profusion of intense violet-blue, open funnel-shaped flowers. In a genus where true blues are non-existent, *R. russatum* makes fine parents for the hybridisers to work with in order to seek out that elusive blue grail. Several images follow.

Sean Rafferty



R. 'Songbird'
R. russatum x *R.* 'Blue Tit Group'
Sir James Horlick 1954



R. 'Blumira'
R. 'Azurika' x *R.* 'Blue Tit Group'
H. Hachmann, 1978



R. 'Blueridge'
R. 'Russatum Group' x *R. augustinii* ssp. *augustinii*
C. R. Haag & V. Brevard, 1966



R. 'Night Sky'
R. 'Blue Steel' x *R.* 'Russatum Group'
J. P. C. Russell, 1967



R. 'Azurika'
R. russatum x *R. impeditum*
H. Hachmann, 1963



R. 'Gletschernacht'
R. russatum x *R.* 'Blue Diamond Group'
H. Hachmann, 1961



R. 'Ilam Violet'
R. 'Electra Group' x *R. russatum*
 E. F. Stead, 1947



R. 'Russatinii Group'
R. russatum x *R. augustinii* ssp. *augustinii*
 Sir John Ramsden, (undated)



R. 'Lauretta'
R. 'Sacko' x *R.* 'Gletschernacht'
 H. Hachmann, 1978



R. 'Bob's Blue'
R. 'Ilam Violet' x *R.* 'Blue Diamond Group'
 R. C. Rhodes, 1977



R. 'Lavendula'
R. '(*russatum* x *saluenense*)' x *R. rubiginosum*
 D. G. Hobbie, 1952



R. 'Rhein's Luna'
R. minus Carolinianum Group x *R.* 'Russatinii Group'
 W. L. Rhein, 1978 (Images: hirsutum.info)