



### **This Month's Meeting**

**Date:** Wednesday, October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2016 @ 7:30 pm

**Topic:** The Evolution of Rhododendrons

**Speaker:** Glen Jamieson

**Plant sales:** Sue Klapwijk

## 2016 Officers

President:	Evelyn Jensen	604-857-5663
Past Pres:	Chris Hodgson	604-541-2382
Vice Pres:	Colleen Bojczuk	604-826-4221
Secretary	Nancy Moore	604-859-3690
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Directors:	Kirsten Martin	778-846-6732
	Sandra Short	604-859-8591
	Jim Worden	604-541-4754
Programme:	Vacant	
Membership:	Ginny Fearing	604-857-4136
Newsletter:	Sean Rafferty	778-528-3647
Librarian:	Joan McGiveron	604-538-9347
Website:	Kirsten Martin	778-846-6732
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BCCGC Liaison:	Vacant	

<http://frasersoutherhododendron.ca/>

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:  
**Langley Mennonite Fellowship Church**  
20997- 40<sup>th</sup>-Street  
Langley BC



## Quick Hits

Joan McGiveron writes:

“Does anyone know the name of a **good, knowledgeable rhododendron pruner** in the South Surrey area? Come this Spring, after flowering, we need the help of such a person to prune a large, overgrown R. Loderi Venus.”

Terry & Joan McGiveron 604-538-9347  
jmcgiv@telus.net





First of all, I hope everyone had wonderful family time at Thanksgiving. I had our dinner (pork roast) last night so the rest of the weekend we enjoy the leftovers!

The main topic for the October meeting will be the new Societies Act By-laws. The vote will take place at a Special General meeting, held at our regular meeting, after the speaker. Please read the e-mail sent to you by Harold Fearing on Oct. 2<sup>nd</sup>.

#### **SOCIETIES ACT BY-LAWS.**

The B. C. Government has stated that all societies in B. C. must submit their by-laws electronically. This law comes into effect November, 2016. This creates an opportunity to make revisions to our by-laws without cost. Between watering and weeding this past summer, Harold Fearing took on the task of suggesting revisions. The suggested revisions have been approved by the executive, and will require a vote by the membership at a Special General

#### **FROM THE PRESIDENT**

Meeting at the October 19<sup>th</sup> meeting. These suggested revisions will be circulated by e-mail to members for their perusal by the end of September.

*Evelyn Jensen*



*R. wallichii* x Yak  
North Sikkim

## This Month:

At the October meeting our program will be Glen Jamieson from Vancouver Island speaking on “The Evolution of Rhododendrons”.

We all know that most rhododendrons are found in China and India, but there are a few in Japan and Korea, a few in Europe, and some along both west and east coasts of North America. How did these get there? What is their relation to the main body of rhododendrons in China? We may not know for sure, but Glen will tell us of possibilities/theories.

This is a somewhat different type of talk than we have had before, and should be very interesting. I hope that you will all be able to come.

*Harold Fearing*

## Last Month:

### **An Amateur Gardener’s Folly—By the Seats of Our Plants (presentation by Chris Byra)**

Built on the steep northern slope of Chilliwack Mountain, Jane and Chris Byra’s 2½ acre garden is a testament to team work and a lot of hard work. Chris likes to move rocks (his own admission), while Jane is the plant expert. Chris has moved tons of rock (both by hand and a neighbour’s machine), and their plant list is a gardener’s dream.

They built their house in 2002, and by 2004 had started gardening around the house. The pond (actually 3 connected ponds with an 18’ drop) went in very early. Chris likes rhododendrons, so they started planting them. Dozens and dozens of them. Their plant interests expanded to include an excellent collection of maples (for stunning fall colour) and magnolias, including a magnificent *Magnolia macrophylla*. Jane likes roses, and has planted *Rosa* ‘Wedding Day’ and *R.* ‘Constance Spry’, among others. They are partial to *Kalmias*, mostly because of their June blooming period and gorgeous flowers.

Their plant list is vast, and includes many cultivars of *Hydrangeas* and *Hostas*, as well as *Arisaema*, cacti, peonies and lilies. They also have *Meconopsis* and *Cardiocrinum giganteum*. They have done a wonderful job of labelling their plants, a real treat for garden visitors.

A few years ago they caught the alpine plant bug, and show no sign of recovery. They’ve built a delightful tufa island garden in their circular driveway, filled with dozens of choice alpinines. In the winter, Jane and Chris put an open structure (polycarbonate roof panels on an aluminum frame) over the rock garden to keep the plants dry.

They’ve also planted 400 yews in staggered rows to provide a wind break and a dark green backdrop for their flowering plants. Garden construction continues, with methods evolving. Chris now runs his water lines under pathways (instead of in the beds) for ease of access and less shovel damage to the lines. Their garden is an on-going labour of love, with truly beautiful results that Jane and Chris are graciously willing to share.



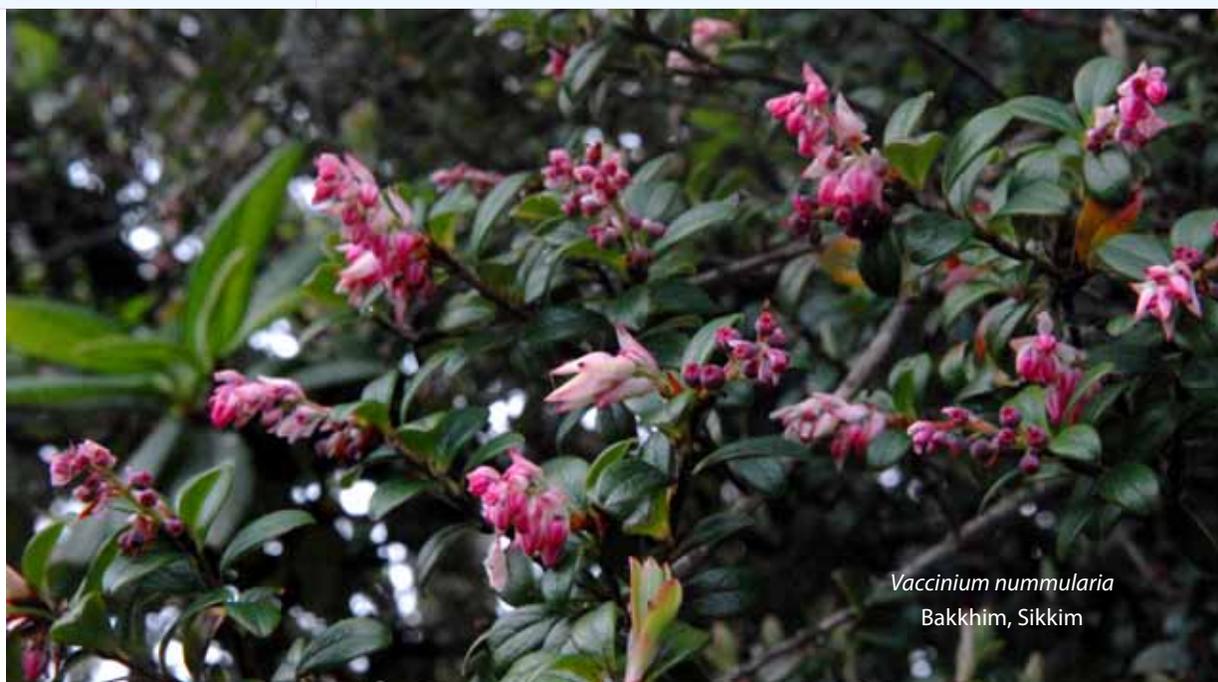
*Nancy Moore*

## The Business Stuff:

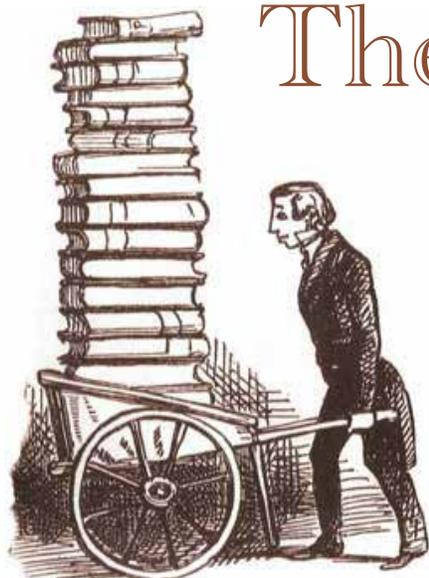
There is convention you should make plans for next spring, [California in 2017](#). Eureka Chapter will host The American Rhododendron Society 2017 ARS Spring Convention “Rhododendrons in the Redwoods”. Mark your calendar now for April 27 through 30, 2017, for the American Rhododendron Society’s annual Spring Convention.

### THE CALENDAR:

<b>Wednesday, October 12</b> 7:00 pm Van Dusen	<b>Alpine Garden Club of BC</b> <b>Susie Egan: The Wonderful World of Trilliums</b>
<b>Wednesday, October 19</b> 7:30 pm Langley Mennonite Hall	<b>Fraser South Rhododendron Society</b> <b>Glen Jamieson: The Evolution of Rhododendrons</b>
<b>Thursday, October 20</b> 7:30 pm Van Dusen	<b>Vancouver Rhododendron Society</b> <b>Daniel Mosquin: Ericaceae of Western North America</b>
<b>Wednesday, November 9</b> 7:30 pm Van Dusen	<b>Alpine Garden Club of BC</b> <b>Jay Akerley: North American Cordillera Plants for the BC Garden</b>
<b>Wednesday, November 16</b> 7:30 pm. Langley Mennonite Hall	<b>Fraser South Rhododendron Society</b> <b>Philip MacDougall: My Favourite Shade Perennials</b>
<b>Thursday, November 17</b> 7:30 pm Van Dusen	<b>Vancouver Rhododendron Society</b> <b>Chris Hodgson: Gardens of Cornwall and Devon</b>
<b>Wednesday, December 14</b> 7:30 pm Van Dusen	<b>Alpine Garden Club of BC</b> <b>Annual Christmas Potluck and Rare Plant Auction</b>
<b>Wednesday, December 14</b> 6:30 pm Langley Mennonite Hall	<b>Fraser South Rhododendron Society</b> <b>Annual Potluck Christmas Party</b>



*Vaccinium nummularia*  
Bakkhim, Sikkim



# The Book Cart

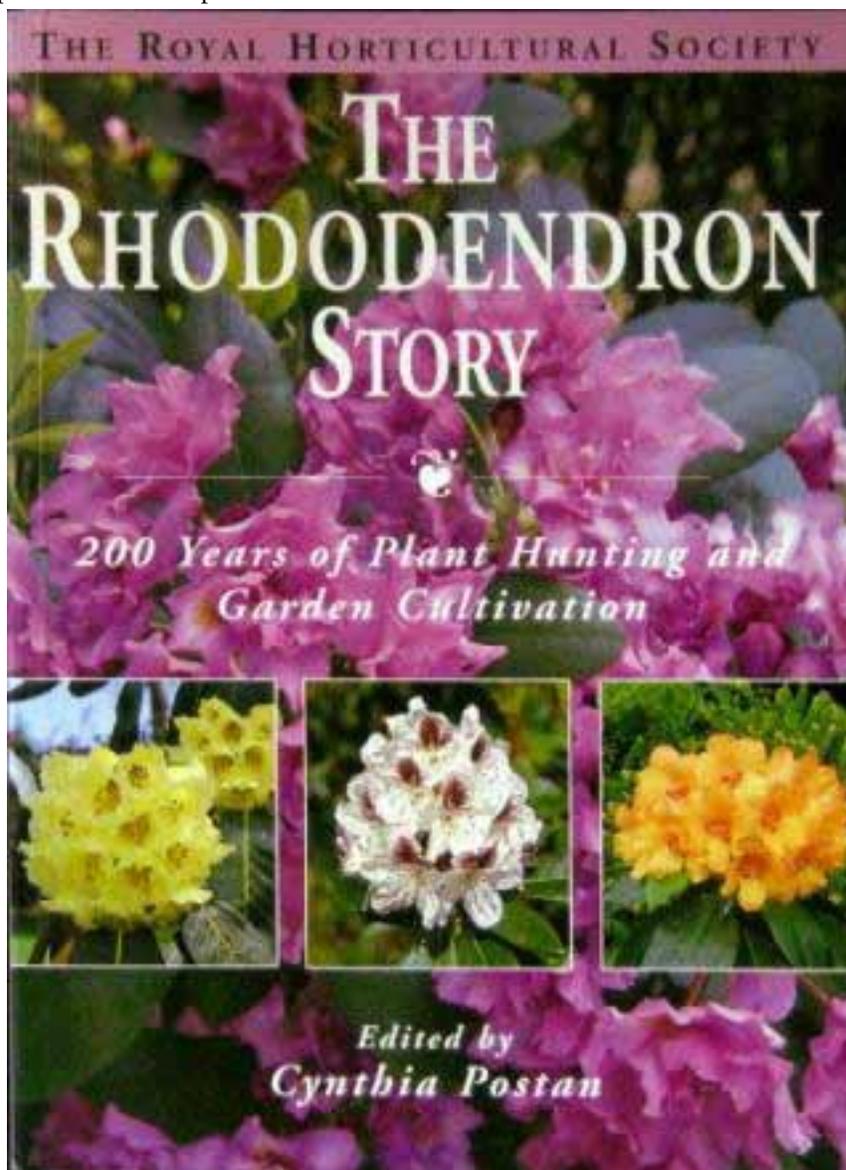
*The Rhododendron Story, 200 Years of Plant Hunting and Garden Cultivation*  
edited by Cynthia Postan. Publisher – The Royal Horticultural Society,  
London, England, ©1996.

224 pages, approx. 19 colour illustrations, 28 black and white diagrams and  
illustrations, a comprehensive index. ISBN 1 874431 426, Grahame Dudley  
Associates, Hansworth, Middlesex

PDF copy of this book available at [http://www.rhodogroup-rhs.org/  
publications/bookpdf/](http://www.rhodogroup-rhs.org/publications/bookpdf/)

The Rhododendron Story is composed of 16 chapters, plus a Forward, Introduction and a good Index at the end. All chapters are written by well-known British Horticulturists and cover a wide variety of subjects which are sure to entice the interest of any serious rhododendron gardener. Chapter 1 takes the reader through a description of Habitat and Ecology: Changes over 200 years, followed by Taxonomy of the Genus in Chapter 2. Each chapter follows a logical sequence which includes Nomenclature, Hooker's Rhododendrons, The Vireya Story, Hybrids in the British Isles: The Nineteenth Century, and follows through with a connection to the many Rhododendron Societies around the world. This book is in our library, and the link to the [PDF files, chapter, by chapter](#) is an added bonus which the Royal Horticultural Society has offered to the reader.

On another Note: When we attended the ARS Fall Conference in Newport Oregon at the end of September/beginning of October, 2016. Dennis Bottemiller gave two excellent "hands on" workshops demonstrating 1) Success with Rhododendron Cuttings and 2) DIY Seed Grown Rhododendrons. He made the point of the very good use he still gets from Cox's Guide to Choosing Rhododendrons by Peter and Kenneth Cox. This book is also in our library, and a review of this book also appears in the library link of the Fraser South Rhododendron Society website.



*Margaret Hodgson*

*R. wightii* (After Robert Wight, former Superintendent of Madras Botanic Gardens)

Joseph Dalton Hooker discovered *Rhododendron wightii* in 1848 while travelling in the Sikkim Himalaya and described it in 1851. It was later discovered, by others, in Bhutan, Nepal and southern Tibet.

*R. wightii* grows at elevations of 11,000-15,000 feet in habitats of woodlands, pastures, hillsides and stony ground, mostly above treeline. Its height varies from 2 feet to 15 feet in the wild. The inflorescence is one sided with flowers which are white to yellow, sometimes with reddish spots or a blotch. The leaves are oblong-elliptic, distinctly convex, slightly bullate and a lower surface with a compacted, thin, dull brown indumentum. It has sticky buds.

*R. wightii* is classified, along with *R. beesianum*, *dignabile* and *lacteum* in the Lacteum Alliance and currently placed within Subsection Taliensa as taxonomists struggle to find all four of them a new home. All four of these rhododendrons are distinct enough to be placed in their own subsection. They share many similarities and are all rare and difficult to grow in cultivation, requiring a cool climate with a very acidic soil and shade from the hot sun. Both *R. lacteum* and *wightii* are yellow or cream and *beesianum* and *dignabile* are pink. They have poor root structures in cultivation and would fare better in a



*R. wightii*

By John Nugent Fitch: Curtis's Botanical Magazine

garden situation if grafted. *R. 'County of York'* is suggested as the best rootstock for grafting purposes. In the Sikkim alpine, *R. wightii* is the most dominant elepidote rhododendron and densely covers vast swaths of the landscape. During a trek to Dzungri, Sikkim, one walks for an hour and a half through a forest of *R. wightii* which covers the hillsides for tens of miles. Similarly, in North Sikkim at 15,000 feet it dominates the landscape alongside *R. campanulatum* ssp. *aeruginosum*.

*R. wightii* is a challenge to grow but should you find it and wish to rise to the challenge, grab hold and embrace it. It has been offered by the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden in the past so keep a lookout.

Sean Rafferty

*Rhododendrons of Sikkim*



*R. wightii*



*R. wightii*



*R. wightii*



*R. wightii* hillside