



# THE YAK

Volume 31, Number 10

December 2017

Fraser South Rhododendron Society  
is a chapter of the  
American Rhododendron Society

<http://frasersouthrhodos.ca>

Meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. on the third  
Wednesday of each month (except June,  
July, August) at:

Langley Mennonite Fellowship Church  
20997 40<sup>th</sup> Street  
Langley, B.C.

Map : <https://goo.gl/maps/ZB1m1jnF9DP2>



Everald Daniel

**Rhododendron 'Christmas Cheer'**  
(*R. caucasicum* X unknown)

## *This Month*



Fraser South Rhododendron Society  
Christmas Potluck Dinner (note date &  
time change)

**Date:** Wednesday, December 13, 2017.  
Doors open at 6:00 p.m.



Kitchen duties: Shawn O'Neill and Ann  
McDougall

## 2017 OFFICERS

President: Evelyn Jensen	604-857-5663
Past Pres: Chris Hodgson	604-541-2382
Vice Pres: Colleen Bojczuk	604-826-4221
Secretary: Margaret Cadwaladr	604-859-3690
Treasurer: Harold Fearing	604-857-4136
Directors: Terry McLellan	604-888-5098
Sandra Short	604-859-8591
Jim Worden	604-541-4754
Programme: Vacant	
Membership: Ginny Fearing	604-857-4136
Newsletter: Maureen Worden	604-541-4754
Librarian: Gerald Nemanishen	604-826-0166
Website: Maureen Worden	604-541-4754
Hospitality: Gail Floyd	604-541-2884
Lois Williams	604-535-0543
BCCGC Liaison: Vacant	

## The Calendar

Wednesday, December 13, 2017 6:00 pm Langley Mennonite Church	Fraser South Rhododendron Society Christmas Potluck Dinner (note date & time change)
Wednesday, January 17, 2018 7:30 pm Langley Mennonite Church	Fraser South Rhododendron Society Desert Extravaganza and Annual General Meeting
Thursday, January 18, 2018 7:30 pm VanDusen Gardens	AGM & member slides
Wednesday, February 21, 2018 7:30 pm Langley Mennonite Church	Fraser South Rhododendron Society TBA
Thursday, February 22, 2018 7:30 pm VanDusen Gardens	Atsuko Gibson - Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden - Japan



## From The President

The Christmas Party is almost here! I will be at the Church by 6 PM to open the doors. We are unable to arrive any sooner as preschool is open until that time. Please arrive by 6:15 and we will endeavor to have the meal ready for serving by 6:30. Please bring appetisers, vegetables, salads, desserts or anything you fancy to compliment the Ham and Turkey. DON'T FORGET, Colleen promise a show stopping quiz.

### AGM- January 2018

As I was unable to find anyone to stand for President. It will be very difficult for FSRs to function without the position of President being filled. The President is a two-year term and then automatically becomes Past President. I am certainly willing to give the new President a great deal of support as I know the entire Executive will do.

**PLEASE** give serious thought to standing for president at the Annual General Meeting.  
Thank you, *Evelyn Jensen*

# Christmas Potluck Dinner



Remember to bring a dish of food to share, with serving utensils if required. Beverages will be provided.

Bring your own plates, mugs, and cutlery, then remember to take them home again.

Be on time, the food will not last!

Bring your festive spirit and enjoy the always excellent food and spirited rhodo company as we celebrate the season.

If after enjoying the bountiful feast you would like a recipe for any of the dishes, we will attempt to track down the creator and publish the requested items in the January Yak.

## Reminders

Our raffles help finance chapter activities. Please bring your contributions, extra plants, garden items, etc.

\*\*\*\*\*

Feel free to suggest program topics and/or speakers to any member of the executive.

\*\*\*\*\*

Submit articles, photos, or suggestions for the newsletter or else you will be stuck with the editors choices.

.....

Looking for a volunteer that is willing to provide a summary of speaker presentations. The summary would be included in the Yak the following month for those unable to attend a meeting.

## From the Editor

Thanks to everyone that provided feedback on the November issue of the Yak, I appreciate it. Winter is definitely on its way but work still needs to be done in the garden, I'm not much for working outside in the rain and we've had a lot a lot of it as well as some very gusty winds. The odd perennial is still trying to grow but that should halt with the cooler weather forecast over the next while. I really enjoy the birds in the garden and these days there is nonstop action from dawn to dusk. Chickadees, pine siskins, house finches, juncos, mourning doves, bushtits, and hairy, downy and pileated woodpeckers as well as flickers visit. I recently put cages over two of my feeders to protect them from squirrel damage and as a result now have a Douglas squirrel coming daily. He sits on the tray within the cage and seems to taunt the other squirrels (i.e. grey and black) while he feasts on sunflower seeds. The Annas hummingbirds are abundant, they love to have baths in the gurgler, and one female staunchly defends "her" feeder and forces the others to another feeder.

Hope everyone can make it to the potluck dinner. I attended my first FRSR Christmas potluck last year and had a great time. Merry Christmas to all!



Maureen Worden

## *From the Archives*



*The following article by Brenda Macdonald originally appeared in the Fraser South Newsletter, December 2006.*



### *The Holly and the Ivy*



I had always wondered about the cultural history of the combination of holly and ivy and Christmas. They seemed such an unlikely pair of dark and woodland plants to celebrate an event which took place in the arid hills of the Middle East.

I became even more curious when I realized that one of my favourite Christmas carols, the beautiful and haunting, "The Holly and the Ivy", doesn't actually mention ivy at all. It is a sort of ghost plant, boldly named as part of the title, but then only hinted at as some sort of holly rival in the body of the song.

Of course the truth is that both these plants, whose berries were visible all throughout the cold and fruitless winter, were used as mid-winter talismans and decorations long before they came to be associated with Christianity.

There appears to have been a long tradition of rivalry between the two plants, as to which one should have pride of place on the walls. And then, somehow genders were assigned to each of the plants, with the upright, strong-wooded holly being male, and the pliant, clinging ivy being female - neither description going on to mention, however, the painfully armoured leaves of the holly tree, or the immense and strangulating strength of the ivy vine.

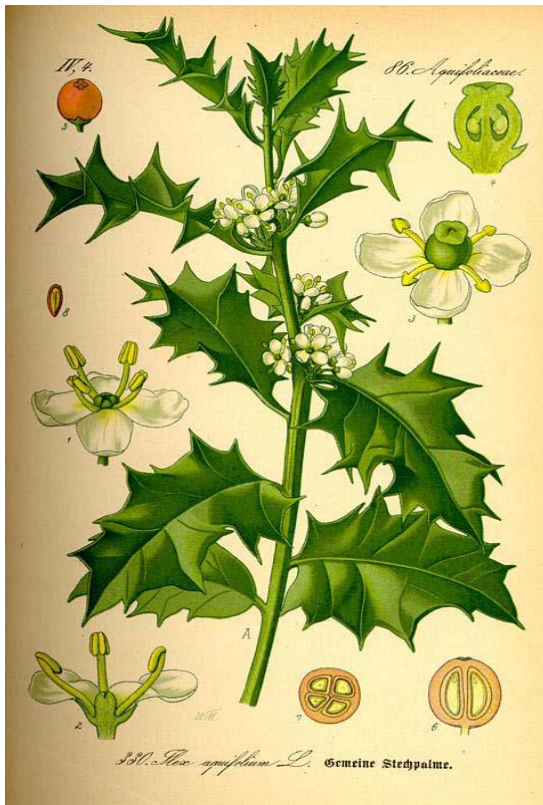
Apparently remnants of those pagan origins insinuated themselves into other Christian events, for as late as the 18th C. one of the pre-Lent activities in the small villages in Kent was the burning of an effigy Hollyboy by all the girls of the village, and of an effigy Ivy-girl, by all boys of the village.

Of course, the blood-red berries and thorned leaves of the holly made it much more accessible for absorption into Christian mythology than did the blueblack berries and plain leaves of the ivy.

The result appears to be that we are left with the iconic holly and a tag-along ivy, commemorating an event which took place hundreds of years after and thousands of miles away from the place where these two plants held sway over the long northern winters.



The following originally appeared in the Fraser South Newsletter, December 2008



# The Holly and The Ivy

English Holly - *Ilex aquifolium*

English Ivy - *Hedera helix*



## More Christmas Traditions

Below are some more widely recognized plants, each one steeped in history and traditions.

### Christmas Rose



The Christmas Rose is an English plant and is considered world wide to be a **"true" Christmas flower**. It's blooming period is the winter season and it's sometimes called the Winter Rose or the Snow Rose. This flower is commonly found in Europe.

The legend of the Christmas Rose is closely linked to the birth of Christ. Here's how the story goes: A young shepherd named Madelon, was tending to her sheep on a winters cold night when the wise men passed her field carrying gifts for the Christ Child. They had wonderful gifts such as gold, myrrh, fruits & honey. Madelon was very poor and could not afford a gift for her newborn king so she began to weep inconsolably. An angel saw her and took pity. He bent down and swept away the snow in front of her. In its place a most beautiful white flower with a tinge of pink appeared; the Christmas Rose.

### Mistletoe



Mistletoe is another Christmas flower whose origins date back to Pagan times. Druid priests used this flower in their winter celebrations, it was magical as it had no roots but stayed green for the duration of winter. Ancient Celts used mistletoe as an antidote for poison, to ward off evil spirits and to help with infertility.

**Used as a symbol of peace** by the Romans, it was said that enemies who met under the mistletoe would lay their weapons down and actually embrace!

Scandinavians associated this flower with Frigga, the goddess of love. This is where the tradition of "kissing under the mistletoe" originated. To this day it is believed that kissing under the mistletoe during Christmas promised happiness and good luck for the year to come.

Due to its Pagan roots, early churches banned the use of mistletoe and instead encouraged it's followers to use Holly for their Christmas greens.

### Christmas Wreaths



Wreaths **symbolize a never-ending circle of life**. Traditionally wreaths featured 4 candles, three were purple and one was pink. These candles represented 4 weeks of preparation for the Christmas holiday. The 4th Sunday before Christmas day the first purple candle was lit with a prayer offered to Jesus who is about to take mortal form. The 3rd Sunday another purple candle is lit and stood for love, then on the 2nd Sunday before Christmas the pink candle was lit, which stood for joy. Finally, a few days before Christmas the last purple candle was lit which symbolized peace.



## The Christmas Tree

This is one of the most widely recognized Christmas symbols around the world. Today's varieties include the Douglas fir, Virginia Pine, Balsam fir & the Scotch pine, amongst others. In past history the Hawthorn and Cherry trees were used. Christmas trees can be traced back to the 7th century AD. A monk who traveled to preach the gospel had used the triangular shape of a fir tree to describe the Holy Trinity of God, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Those who embraced the new faith began to consider the Fir tree to be God's tree. By the 12th century it was a symbol of Christianity.

The idea of decorating a tree became popular in Victorian times. They used a star for the top and decorated the rest of the tree with beaded decorations, snowflakes, candles and silver tinsel. This is also when themed trees started to become popular, for example a color theme.

The Christmas tree has always **symbolized birth and new beginnings during the darkest time of the year - winter.**

## The Poinsettia



Poinsettias (*Euphorbia pulcherrima*) are originally native to an area known as Taxco del Alarcon located in Southern Mexico. The plant was cultivated by the Aztec Aborigines who referred to it in their language as Cuitlaxochitl (from cuitlatl=residue, and xochitl=flower) meaning "flower that grows in residues or soil". The colourful bracts were used by the Aztecs to make a reddish purple dye and a fever medicine was derived from the poinsettia's milky sap (known today as "latex").

The plant's association with Christmas appears to have begun in 16th century Mexico, where a legend tells of a young girl who was too poor to provide a gift for the celebration of Jesus' birthday. The story relates that the girl was inspired by an angel to gather weeds and place them in front of the church altar. Bright crimson "blossoms" sprouted from the weeds and became beautiful poinsettias. After the Spanish conquest and the introduction of Christianity, poinsettias began to be used in Christian rituals. During the 17th century, Franciscan friars in Mexico used the plants in their Christmas celebrations. The star-shaped leaf pattern is said to symbolize the Star of Bethlehem, and the red colour represents the blood sacrifice through the crucifixion of Jesus.





## *From the Garden*

As we move towards winter tree bark provide interest in the garden.



*Acer palmatum* "Oridono nishiki" This Japanese Maple has attractive creamy white-variegated deciduous green foliage with hints of rose which emerges rose in spring. The small glossy lobed palmate leaves are highly ornamental and turn outstanding shades of burgundy and red in the fall.

Pictured with its fall colors in the November edition of the YAK, is *Stewartia pseudocamellia*, also known as Korean stewartia, Japanese stewartia, or deciduous camellia, is a plant species in the genus *Stewartia* in the family Theaceae, native to Japan and Korea.





## Top Rhododendrons

Continuing with the list of the top 100 rhododendrons that was compiled from a survey of over 250 worldwide submissions from members of the RHS Rhododendron, Magnolia & Camelia Group, this month we feature the rhododendrons that came in positions 11 through 20 in the survey.



11. edgeworthii



12. schlippenbachii



13. Polar Bear



14. calophytum



15. thomsonii



16. auriculatum



17. *fragrantissimum*



18. *williamsianum*



19. *maddenii* ssp *crassum*

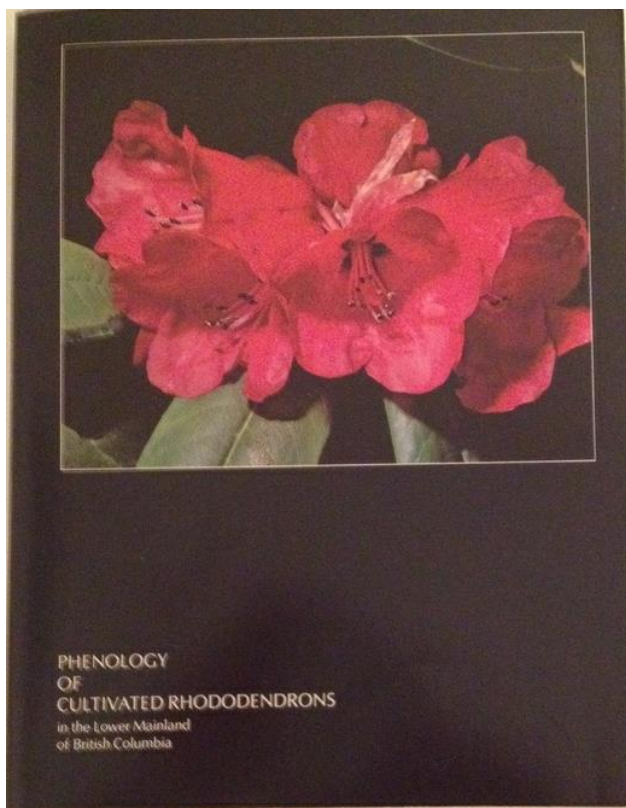


20. *mallotum*

Credits: All pictures are from <http://hirsutum.info>

- 11. Hank Helm, Bainbridge Island, Washington, USA
- 12. Susan Lightburn, Everett Washington, USA
- 13. Yves Tuset, France
- 14. Garth Wedemire, Maple Ridge, BC
- 15. Jens Birck, Kastrup, Denmark
- 16. Hank Helm, Bainbridge Island, Washington, USA
- 17. Andrew Leverton, London, UK
- 18. Coen Zonneveld, Diepenveen, Netherlands
- 19. Hank Helm, Bainbridge Island, Washington, USA
- 20. Everard Daniel, Devon, UK





## *From the Library*

Phenology of Cultivated Rhododendrons  
in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia  
by L Keith Wade, published by the  
Botanical Garden at UBC.

Soft cover, 225 pages in seven sections  
and including a bibliography and  
appendix.

This publication is the result of a study in 1979 sponsored jointly by The Botanical Garden at the University of British Columbia and the Vancouver Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society.

The phenology is data collected by several people in the lower mainland from Stanley Park, Point Grey, West Vancouver, North Vancouver, Haney and Mission. The results were published for the 1979 A.R.S. Convention in Vancouver. Three flowering seasons were studied for the data and included weather data and flowering times for several species and hybrids.

I think it is fascinating to see what the phenology was like nearly 40 years ago. This book was found in a box of books donated to Harold Fearing for use in the library.

*Gerald Nemanishen,*  
Librarian FSRS