



THE YAK

Volume 32, Number 9

November 2018

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

<http://frasersouthernrhodos.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 40th Street
Langley, B.C.

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

Next Meeting

Date: Wednesday, Nov 21, 2018 at 7:30pm

Speaker: Barbara Mathias of FSRS on
“Botany and cycling through Iran”. Come
help identify the mysterious plants seen
while cycling along the ancient desert
roads of Persia.

Kitchen Duties: Judy Wellington &
Gerald Nemanishen



Bob's Blue (Ilam Violet x Blue diamond). Rhodes

Semi-dwarf: Low H4-5. Early – Mid
flowering time. Flowers are funnel-
shaped, open lavender then change to
luminescent violet-blue, in trusses of 3-5
flowers. Leaves are small, leathery, dark
bronze-green in summer turning to
maroon in winter.

2018 OFFICERS

| | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Acting President: | Colleen Bojczuk | 604-826-4221 |
| Past Pres: | Evelyn Jensen | 604-857-5663 |
| Vice Pres: | Colleen Bojczuk | 604-826-4221 |
| Secretary: | Barbara Mathias | 778-580-6404 |
| Treasurer: | Harold Fearing | 604-857-4136 |
| Directors: | Caroline Feldinger | 778-545-8994 |
| | Judy Wellington | 604-597-9156 |
| | Jim Worden | 604-541-4754 |
| Programme: | Jim Worden | 604-541-4754 |
| 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 | |



Membership Renewal

Thanks to all who have already renewed their memberships for 2019.

If you have yet to renew, please see Ginny Fearing at the November meeting, or send your renewal to Ginny by mail.

Recommended Reading

Check out the website and read about "The First 10 Years" of the Fraser South Rhododendron Society

The Calendar

| | |
|---|---|
| Vancouver Rhododendron Society Thursday November 15, 2018 7:30 pm VanDusen Gardens | Garth Wedemire, "Gardens of Wales", based on a 2018 tour with the Scottish Rhododendron Society |
| Fraser South Rhododendron Society Wednesday November 21, 2018 7:30 pm Langley Mennonite Church | 30 th Anniversary meeting. Barbara Mathias of FSRS on "Botany and cycling through Iran". Come help identify the mysterious plants seen while cycling along the ancient desert roads of Persia |
| Fraser South Rhododendron Society Wednesday December 12, 2018. Time: TBA Langley Mennonite Church | Christmas Pot-luck dinner |
| Fraser South Rhododendron Society Wednesday January 16, 2019. Time: 7:30 Langley Mennonite Church | Annual Desert Extravaganza and Annual General Meeting |
| Vancouver Rhododendron Society Thursday January 17, 2018 7:30 pm VanDusen Gardens | AGM, with talks by Jacquie Clayton on Sikkim, Chris Hodgson on the 2018 Bremen ARS Convention, and |

Happy 30th Anniversary Fraser South Rhododendron Society

This month marks the thirtieth anniversary for the Fraser South Rhododendron Society. The original meeting was held in the home of Les and Bev Clay on November 18, 1988.

The following is taken from a 2008 YAK (the 20th anniversary year) and still applies today.

“We owe a debt to these early pioneers and to the many others who have contributed over the twenty years to make our chapter what it is. Perhaps a good goal for this anniversary year would be to recruit some new and enthusiastic members who are young enough to carry the chapter through its next twenty years”.

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.

Speaker reviews are always welcome!

Plan to join us at the Christmas pot-luck dinner Wednesday, December 12th. Let's have a good turnout to kick off the holidays!

From the Editor

It's almost the middle of November and some of the annuals (geraniums and lantana) in the yard continue to bloom along with a number of perennials including the hardy fuchsias. The coleus and other tender annuals hit by the cooler evenings finally wilted and shrivelled, done for another year.

Bob's Blue (page 1) is in full bloom for the second time this year and a number of the other rhododendrons have some second blooms appearing. A few of the rhododendrons have been moved to new locations to allow for their continued growth. Polar Bear which consistently adds 6 - 8 inches of stem growth per year really needed a new home. This inspired the article selection this month for "From the Archives".

The great leaf cleanup continues on almost a daily basis. Unlike our neighbours who green bin their leaves for pickup, ours are blown/raked into piles, picked up and put into wire bins. Only the leaves from the fruit trees are discarded due to potential fungus like rust. By next spring, the binned leaves will provide leaf mulch for the garden and flower beds. Fortunately this year, the big leaf maples are all down BEFORE any major wind storms. Lots of leaves still to go but "From the Garden" will provide a snapshot of some of the fall color we enjoyed this year.

This month we include a tribute to one of the original Fraser South members who recently passed. I would like to thank John and Gael Dodd for providing a wonderful tribute to Vern Finley. The final installment of the "Top 100 Rhododendrons" is this month. I have a couple of ideas for a new series – stay tuned!

Don't forget to put the annual Christmas potluck dinner Dec 12th in your calendar. I hope to see everyone there!

Maureen Worden

The following article originally appeared in the Fraser South Newsletter, January 2003.



Rootstalk

by Indumentum

Rhododendrons are not dormant in the winter like deciduous plants. You can tell a rhododendron is growing in the winter because of the way the leaves respond to freezing weather. They curl up to reduce transpiration from the leaf surface to compensate for the frozen roots being unable to take up water. But when the winter temperature is above freezing, it is an ideal time to move rhododendrons. You do not have to worry about watering in a relocated plant and there is plenty of time for the rootball to settle in before the spring.

The rootballs of young rhododendrons can be lifted out of the ground easily as they are so compact, they come up like a brick out of stone paving. Very large rhododendrons can only be moved with a bobcat or other heavy machinery. Ken Gibson of Tofino has used a crane for some of his big moves. However, the home gardener often has to move medium-sized rhododendrons with large rootballs, which regular readers will recognize as one of Indumentum's favourite topics. In this section of *The Yak*, 'Rootballs "X" Us'.

The basic equipment required is a long-handled shovel, a six-foot pry bar and a rubber-tired moving dolly. Canadian Tire stocks a 1000 lb dolly with very large pneumatic tires which roll over rough terrain much better than the typical moving dollies available for about half the price at Home Depot. The platform is too small for rhododendron moves but this can easily be extended by drilling three holes in the plate and bolting a piece of half-inch plywood on top.

The first step is to cut a circle around the rhododendron below the drip line. If this results in too large a rootball then the diameter can be reduced but the plant will be more stressed. For larger plants it will be necessary to dig a trench around the plant. The next step is to drive the shovel in under the roots as far as possible and then lift the roots up all around the plant. This should be done a couple of times to ensure that the edges of the rootball are completely free from the surrounding soil. Then drive the pry bar under the centre of the rootball to cut between the roots and the soil. Using a block of wood under the pry bar, gradually lever up the rootball starting at the edges and working towards the centre. Be careful not to lift the rootball too much at this stage or the rootball could tear and break. Once the rootball is more or less free from the underlying soil, slide the pry bar directly under the centre of the plant stem and lever up the whole plant using additional blocks of wood to gain the extra height



Digging around the drip line.



Prying up the edges of the rootball.



Lifting the rhodo with the pry bar under the stem.

Move the plant onto the dolly platform by a combination of levering up the rootball and sliding the dolly further and further underneath. You may have to pull on the plant stem which is often not recommended in the literature. However, if the plant and rootball are healthy, this is usually not a problem. If you feel the rootball start to tear, however, stop pulling on the stem. For larger plants, I usually tie the plant to the dolly with thick rope to reduce the chances of it sliding off in transit.

For planting the rhododendron, mix in a barrow load of bark mulch (composted if you have it) and dig a shallow dish-shaped hole. Remember that the plant should be slightly raised above the general bed level for good drainage and to reduce the chance of the stem being buried in mulch, which could cause it to rot. Ken Gibson's dictum is that rhododendrons should be placed, not planted. The plant can be oriented the way you want, prior to sliding it off the dolly into the hole.

It used to be recommended to disbud the rhododendron after moving it but we do not follow this practice. Some plants however, take a few years to settle in and maybe disbudding would help. We have found that most of the hundreds of rhododendrons that we have moved, carry on the next spring as if nothing had happened.



To balance the weight over the wheels, the handle must be kept at a low angle .



Working the dolly platform under the rootball.



The platform extension is essential for a rhodo this size.



Lifting the plant out of the hole.



Placing the rhodo over the new hole.

Vern Finley 1926 - 2018



It is with great sadness that we acknowledge the death of Vern Finley on October 11, 2018. She was in her 92nd year.

Vern was one of the founding members of the South Fraser Rhododendron Society at its start-up 30 years ago. She, her husband Gordon, and daughter Sue, were very active club members for many years. Prior to this she had been a member of the Vancouver Rhododendron society.

Over the years the family provided club members with a huge supply of plant introductions propagated from seed and cuttings at their hobby farm in south Langley.

Her residence, on the south slope of the Fraser River in Surrey, was home to a

magnificent rhododendron garden. The Finley's were tireless in their experimentation, and produced numerous exciting crosses. Vern was instrumental in introducing a seedling from a donated collection, discovered in her garden, the red rhododendron "Burnaby Centennial", It became the signature plant during the City of Burnaby's centennial celebration in the early 70's.

Vern will be remembered for her quiet good humour and gentle nature. This often left you off guard as her quick wit and incisive mind delivered remarkably perceptive observations.

For many years Vern was considered the go-to guru in our club in matters Rhododendron. Her knowledge was encyclopedic, and she was seldom at a loss in her ability to identify an unknown plant. This beautiful lady repeatedly charmed our club members with huge bowls of exotic bloom, often out of season in other's gardens, but thriving in her own. She would proceed to describe them in precise detail.

Vern's interests and skills were eclectic. She was an avid golfer, and a fiercely competitive bridge player. She was also famous for her beautiful floral arrangements. In her younger years, concerned that a medical emergency might ultimately require her to land the family airplane, she obtained her own pilot's licence.

On our innumerable picnics and field trips, Vern was fun to be near. Her ready laughter and light heartedness were always uplifting. There are people in life that leave an indelible impression. Vern certainly had that impact on many of us. We will forever remain grateful that we had a chance to know her, and share some wonderful moments in her presence.

John and Gael Dodd

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 final group of rhododendrons that came in positions 91 through 100 in the survey.



91. Cornish Cross



92. Markeeta's Prize



93. Countess Of Haddington



94. Matador



95. Loder's White



96. Seta



97. *R. sutchuenense*



98. *R. neriiflorum*



99. *R. nobleanum*



100. *R. recurvoides*

Credits:

- 91. Homer Salley
- 92. Philip Evans, Halgrabron Mill, Devon
- 93. Mike Robison, Trengwainton, Cornwall
- 94. Ken Gibson
- 95. John Archer
- 96. Russell Beeson, Dorset.
- 97. Glynne Jones
- 98. Robin Whiting, Deer Dell
- 99. Stephen Lyus, Ness Gardens
- 100. Hans Eiberg

From the Garden





Schlippenbachii



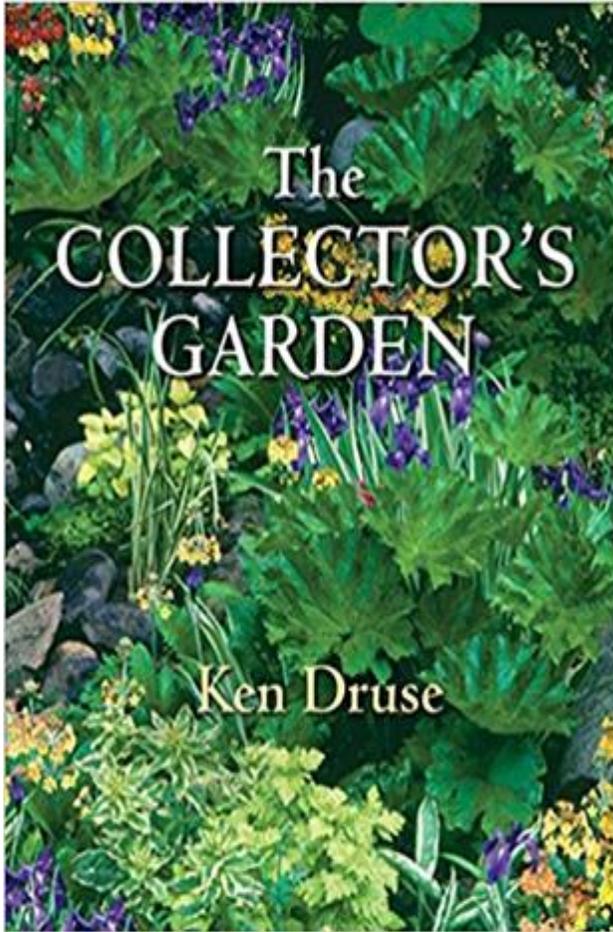
Witch Hazel



Visiting Baird Owl



Can you find him/her ?



The Collectors Garden

by Ken Druse.

Timber Press, Portland and Cambridge. 2004, Originally printed in 1996 by Clarkson Potter of New York.

Divided into forty chapters, including an index and suggestions for further reading.

I love to read British books and magazines about their gardens. I am jealous of their garden scheme where gardeners open their properties for the public to visit. So it was particularly refreshing to find a book written about gardens in the United States.

The photography is spectacular and the plant descriptions follow the British writing tradition of using Latin names for plants. The book describes collections and is divided into the sections of Hunter, Missionaries, Specialists and Aesthetes.

Although dated, it is an excellent book to read. Some of the mentioned gardeners are no longer with us such as Harold Epstein who introduced *Hakonechloa macra* "Aureola". This is a favorite grass of mine.

Gerald Nemanishen , Librarian FSRS