

THE YAK

Volume 34, Number 2

February 2020



R. strigillosum

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

<http://frasersouthrhodos.ca>

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

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 Ave.
Langley, B.C.

Cover: *R. strigillosum*



Predominant Flower Color: Rich deep red to crimson-scarlet

Flower/Truss Description: 8-12 flowered, usually flat-topped. Corolla tubular-campanulate, with depressed, black-crimson nectar pouches, 4-6cm long; pedicel usually covered with hairs; calyx c.1mm; ovary with long reddish glandular hairs; style glabrous.

Fragrant: No

Bloom Time: Early in flower and growth, needing a protected site in most climates. Best in partial shade.

Foliage Description: 8-18 x 2.5-4.5cm, oblong-lanceolate to oblanceolate, margin with strongly recurved, bristles on young leaves white, retained 1-3 years; lower surface, midrib and petiole with long bristles and +/- shortish stalked hairs.

Plant Habit: 3-6m; a shrub or small tree, often round and symmetrical in habit. Branchlets +/- covered with long bristles. Leaf buds sticky.

Cold Hardiness Temp: 0°F (-18°C)

Elepidote (E) or Lepidote (L): L
Sub Genus: *Rhododendron*
Section: *Rhododendron*
Sub Section: *Maculifera*

Distribution: Sichuan and N.E. Yunnan (7,000-11,000ft), in thickets or in the open on cliffs and slopes.

Introduced 1904-1910, reintroduced 1990s

Source: *The Encyclopedia of Rhododendron Species* by Peter A. Cox & Kenneth N.E. Cox

This Month

Ron Long - "The Beauty and Challenge of Flower Photography" (Their beauty is the challenge)

"I have given many talks that included hundreds of my wildflower photographs from around the world. This talk is a little different. I'm billing it as an instructional talk on how to make great flower photos and it will include tips that will be helpful to photographers. However the real purpose of this talk is to provide an excuse for me to present a collection of my very best flower photographs, most of which have not been seen before now. Non-photographer plant lovers and those who appreciate the beauty, art and design of nature will find much to enjoy." Ron Long

Date: Wednesday, February 19, 2020.

Kitchen Duties: Rob Talbot & John Lapins

Next Month

Date: Wednesday, March 18, 2020 at 7:30 pm.

Annual General Meeting and "Just Desserts Extravaganza"



Rescheduled from January due to weather, come for an evening and bring your favorite dessert to share with the group and see Member slideshows.

Also on the books is the Annual General Meeting where all AGM related items will be addressed.

2019 OFFICERS

President:	Colleen Bojczuk	604-826-4221
Past Pres:	Evelyn Jensen	604-857-5663
Vice Pres:	Jim Worden	604-541-4754
Secretary:	Barbara Mathias	778-580-6404
Treasurer:	Harold Fearing	604-857-4136
Directors:	Caroline Feldinger	250-614-6626
	Gerry Nemanishen	604-826-0166
	Vacant	
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	

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!

Members are welcome to send their own "In the
Garden" photos to the editor for inclusion in the YAK.

From the President

Well, other than a small pile of snow still in the front lawn from all the driveway and deck shovelling, I can now see the garden again. The snowdrops are opening, and other bulbs in the shelter of the cedar hedge are well up. The Hellebores are nicely budded and starting to show a bit of color, although I did put the potted ones in the porch in the worst of the storm. Not much else is active yet, as none of the Rhodos are generally this early – the PJM will be first in due time. I hope everyone survived the storm as well as we did, and I got a jump on spring cleaning during a few 'snow days' off from work too. Even so, I'm not holding my breath for spring yet. I'm glad we cancelled the January meeting, so no one needed to risk travelling in such poor road conditions

This month's speaker, Ron Long, will surely get us revved up to get some great pictures just as the fabulous spring colors start appearing.

We also need to get ready for some garden tours this year – Petals and Butterflies Nursery should be a must –so who knows? Maybe some members would also volunteer for a quick after- supper visit, or perhaps a short Sunday afternoon? Any other ideas will certainly be welcome – please speak up at the meeting.

Also remember that March will be the AGM and Decadent Dessert meeting, and I hope to hear that the needed volunteers for several previously mentioned positions within the club will step up. Thank you.

Respectfully, *Colleen B.*

Upcoming events

Fraser South Rhododendron Society Wednesday February 19, 2020 7:30 pm	Ron Long - The Beauty and Challenge of Flower Photography (Their beauty is the challenge) Bio: Ron Long was the sciences photographer at Simon Fraser University for 36 years. Over fifty years ago he developed an interest in native plants and flowers have been his favourite photographic subject ever since. Now retired, Ron travels to botanical hotspots around the world. Recent travels have taken him to Southern Africa (6x) South and Central America (6x), Australia and numerous botanical locations in North America. Ron is a past president of the Native Plant Society of BC, is a past board member of the Alpine Garden Club of BC and is active in the Botany section of the Vancouver Natural History society.
Vancouver Rhododendron Society Thursday February, 17 2020 7:30 pm	Annual General Meeting with tribute to long-time member Alleyne Cook.
Fraser South Rhododendron Society Wednesday March 18, 2020 7:30 pm	The Annual General Meeting and "Just Desserts Extravaganza" followed by Member slideshows. (postponed from January)
Vancouver Rhododendron Society Thursday March 19, 2020 7:30 pm	TBA
Fraser South Rhododendron Society Wednesday April 15, 2020 7:30 pm	Danielle Dagenais, MSc, PAg from the South Coast Bat Conservation Society will speak on Bats and bat houses
Vancouver Rhododendron Society Thursday April 16, 2020 7:30 pm	TBA
Fraser South Rhododendron Society Wednesday May 20, 2020 7:30 pm	Annual Truss Show

Upcoming Conferences

ARS 2020 Spring Conference <https://ars75.org>

- ARS 75th Anniversary Convention, Apr. 29 - May 3, 2020, Portland, Oregon.

ARS 2021 Spring Conference

- ARS Annual Convention, June 3 - 6, 2021, Annapolis Valley, Nova Scotia, Canada.

Darts Hill Events: www.dartshill.ca

- AGM – March 7, 2020 10:00am - 12:00pm

Susan Murray - Featured Speaker: "Rare and Unusual Plants of SW Australia"

Douglas Justice - "Show and Tell" of Darts Hill Garden Park Plants

From the Editor

Welcome to February and somewhat more seasonal weather. The snowfalls in January once again proved that it depends on where you live in the Lower Mainland and in which direction the weather is approaching from, that determines how much snow you receive. Our only casualty appears to be some evergreen magnolia branches that could not handle the weight of either the initial “dry” snowfall or the subsequent weight of the “wet” snowfall. This magnolia has suffered in previous years but once trimmed, fortunately will grow back quite quickly. While I enjoy clear cold weather, the added wind factor had me going outside every couple of hours during the worst of the cold to rotate the hummingbird feeders. Even with the sugar water they were freezing that fast. Without a power source nearby to provide a warming device for the feeders, I plan to invest in another feeder before next winter and hopefully cut down on the numbers of trips required to keep my “wee friends” fed. I had so many birds coming to feed that I had to refill the feeders in the early afternoons and make a special trip to the bird store to stock up.

Like most gardens, our non-rhododendron plantings are showing that spring is indeed on the way (maybe not this month according to the farmers almanac forecast below). The snow drops are out in force, the daffodils are up about six inches and the tulips can be seen poking their way out of the soil. The daylily clumps are showing lots of green, magnolia buds are plumping, and the hellebores are up and about to open their flowers. If you’re wondering why I didn’t mention crocuses which are usually seen in a gardening landscape, I haven’t planted any in years. Any remaining from previous plantings are a favourite treat for the wild bunnies that hop in and out of our yard on a regular basis. The weeds are also doing well, regardless of the recent snow. I spent a couple of hours last week, weeding the rose bed in hopes that if I get the invaders now, they may not return in the spring. As they say “hope springs eternal”.

R. *rireii* had a short bloom prior to the snow as shown in last month’s YAK and this month has provided us with a more substantial bloom. Amazing how plants know to hold back, saving the better display until after the snow. This month’s “In The Garden” highlights wonderful purple/green foliage on a R. *cinnabarium* var. *purpurellum*, the indumentum not only on/under leaves but on new growth stems (R. *flinckii*) and the wonderful peeling bark of R. *barbatum*. R. *praeevernum* appears to be deciding whether it’s safe to bloom yet.

This month’s speaker, Ron Long, promises to provide a wonderfully visual and educational presentation. Be sure to pass the information on his presentation along to all your gardening acquaintances and invite them to join us. It will be a good one!

As our AGM was moved to March due to weather, I will once again reiterate “Don’t let the thought of attending an AGM put you off coming to next months meeting. The business activities are quickly and efficiently handled and then the desserts extravaganza and member slide shows begin”.

Enjoy your Valentine’s Day and be sure to show a loved one, neighbour or friend that they are appreciated in your life.

Maureen Worden

February 2020 Long Range Weather Forecast for Southern British Columbia (Source: Farmer’s Almanac 2020)

Dates	Weather Conditions
Feb 1-8	Periods of rain and snow coast, snow showers inland; very cold
Feb 9-17	Rainy periods coast, snow showers inland; turning mild
Feb 18-20	Sunny, cold
Feb 21-24	Rainy periods coast, rain and snow inland; mild
Feb 25-29	Sunny, cold
February	temperature -2°C (2°C below avg.) precipitation 150mm (10mm above avg.)



The following article originally appeared in the Fraser South Newsletter, February 2011 by Colleen Forster

Shared Wisdom

TO SAVE OR NOT TO SAVE – THE CHRISTMAS PLANT DILEMMA

So ... now we've taken down the lights, chipped the tree and put away the mantle village, and all that's left of our Christmas finery are those lovely blooming plants that our guests and family have thoughtfully given us. But we can't pack them away in the crawl space, and we feel vaguely guilty about just chucking them out – after all, they are living plants, and we are plant people! So what to do? I must confess I have tried and tried to 'do the right thing' and save them, but somehow, despite the best of advice and intentions, I have failed miserably save for a couple of pitiful cactus that manage to push out a few lonely blooms each year.

I've rationalized my poor performance by explaining that just when they need that crucial bit of attention after their post-bloom rest, I'm so excited about my outdoor garden emerging that I forget all about them. Hey – it works for me! So if you're weak and sympathetic, and have succumbed to the guilt and intend to keep them, here are some pointers given by the experts to ensure success (right).

The Christmas Cactus (*Schlumbergera*), although called a cactus, is actually from tropical rainforests, and prefers good light, cooler temperatures, and moderate



watering with good drainage. The Easter Cactus (*Zygocactus*) can be treated in the same way. Once all the blooms are spent, the plant needs a rest for a few months to recuperate. It should be kept fairly dry, in cool bright indirect light. By March or so, you may notice new shoots growing at the tips. If the plant is leggy, the end segments can be carefully cut off and rooted for more plants.

The original plant can be potted-up one size if root bound, and given moderate doses of balanced fertilizer. By fall, after all that new

growth has filled in, and you haven't given it root-rot by over watering, or sun scald by too much exposure, you should find a cool bright place to put it to set the buds. It will respond to 14 hours of total darkness each night, or night temps of 10-13C (50-55F) consistently. As soon as you see the flower buds have formed, move it to the place you'd like to enjoy it for the holidays, as they dislike drastic changes once in bloom, and the buds will drop.

Of course, you could be one of those 'green hands' people (like my Mum) who must have just the perfect situation, for they do nothing special, and their plants are both ancient and glorious!

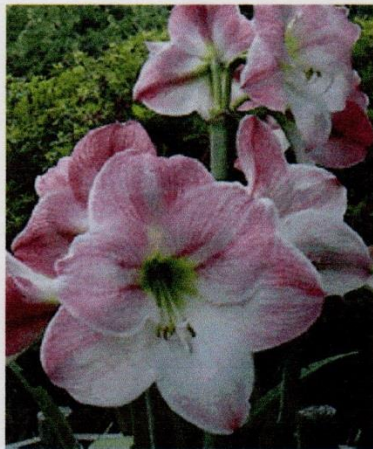
Maybe you received an Azalea this year, and since we all grow them so easily outside, what could be easier – right? Just be aware, these florist varieties are almost always 'Southern Indicas', and usually can only tolerate a few

degrees of frost, if any. They should bloom for 3-4 weeks if kept cool, bright and moist. Once the weather warms up nicely, say in April, trim



it for shape if you wish, put it outside in bright indirect light, feed it some rhodo food (the potted soil has little available nutrition), and keep it evenly moist by plunging in mulch. Bring it back into a cool bright place before frost, and it should be blooming again by Christmas. Cool and humid keeps the buds from dropping.

That Amaryllis should be on its second or third bloom stem now, and will grow more leaves as the blooms fade. Keep it bright, with a bit of food and moderate water into the summer. You can put it outside when frost is over, with shelter from wind. By late summer, the leaves should begin to fade, so gradually slack off the water to no water at all, and let it be. Store in a cool dry place in or out of the pot till late fall (some say put it in refrigerator, some say tip it over under a bench in



the greenhouse – you choose). For blooming at Christmas, figure 7-8 weeks lead time. Pot it up in fresh soil in a pot not much bigger than the bulb, with good drainage, leaving the neck and shoulder above the soil, and water just a bit until growth appears. I

turn mine regularly so the blooms grow straight. They say these are easy, but I've found that after the second year overturned under the greenhouse bench, they've kinda had it! Pansies!

The Cyclamen also grows from a bulb-type base (a corm, like gladdies or begonias), and the growth cycle is much the same – grow, bloom, rest. The leaves can remain for a couple of months after the blooms are



finished if kept cool, bright, and not soggy wet (seems to be a trend happening here). Once the leaves start to fade, ease off on the water till they go, and then rest the corm in the pot until early fall. Replace or replenish the soil, and then water more as you see leaves starting. Soon the flower buds should be unfurling for another gorgeous display.

And now for the one we all love to hate – the Poi***** (*Euphorbia pulcherrima*), which we do not speak of within earshot of our editor. In truth, to succeed in keeping this one over, you must have obtained it from a reputable source and made sure it was kept warm at all times – even a short trip across a rainy, windy parking lot and home in a cold car can be the death knell, and

nothing you do thence forward will help you one bit! They cannot tolerate cold drafts below 10C (50F) or excessive dry heat either – around 18-21C (65-70F) is good. They should be watered when the soil surface is dry to touch, with lukewarm water, and have bright indirect light for at least 6 hours a day. Ensure that it has good drainage – that pretty pot cover may be drowning the Poinsettia within!



If purchased when the true flowers in the center are still closed, the bracts should last at least a couple of months, but even if all else had been done properly, the leaves may be getting tired by then too. Put the plant aside in a slightly cooler place, and water only as needed to keep from shriveling. By April you can cut it back to 8 inches and start to give regular liquid feeding. You can even put it outside once it stays above 13C (55 F) at night. By June it may need potting up or refreshing.

To have blooms at Christmas again, it needs total darkness for 14 hours a night after October 1- (no turning on the light for a quick check of how it is doing). Once the bracts are coloring, don't feed any more.

Oh, and by the way, studies have proven that the sap is not really all that poisonous to humans (pets are another thing, so watch them carefully). A 50lb child would have to eat in excess of 500 bracts to be seriously affected. However, some people can be allergic, as with many plants, and they should not handle Poinsettias without gloves and extra care.

In light of all this scintillating advice, I should think that you're all bursting with enthusiasm and verve, ready to take on the new plant world of re-blooming Christmas gifts, and wowing all your friends and family with your horticultural genius. I read this over myself and sigh..... maybe I'll try again; maybe it'll work this time. Sigh.....

Happy Indoor Gardening (for now) Colleen Forster

From the Garden



**R. cinnabarinum
var. purpurellum**



R. barbatum



R. ririei

R. flinckii



R. praeevernum

Ted and Mary Greig Rhododendron Garden

The "50 rhododendrons of interest" in the Ted and Mary Greig Rhododendron garden in Stanley Park" continues. (Source: City of Vancouver)

9 *Rhododendron* 'Baden Baden'



'Baden Baden' is a short, dense, small-leaved rhododendron that has bright crimson red flowers with darker centres and wavy margins. It is a hybrid that was developed in Germany.

14 *Rhododendron* 'Cilpinense'

This hybrid is unique in that nearly all parts of the plant, including both sides of its shiny green leaves, are covered in short, fine, copper-coloured hairs. It produces pale blush pink flowers in March, which are held in loose trusses of 2-3.



10 *Rhododendron* 'Beauty of Littleworth'



'Beauty of Littleworth' is a splendid rhododendron that produces tall, robust white trusses in May. Each flower, though mauve in bud, is pure white, with the exception of a purple speckle on its top petal and a pink stigma. It is large, fast-growing

and can have a rather droopy habit. Its trusses are truly enormous; each flower may grow to be up to 12cm wide and there are typically between 15-18 flowers per truss.

11 *Rhododendron* 'Beethoven'

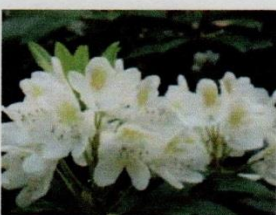
Rhododendron 'Beethoven' is a dense evergreen azalea with small dark green leaves. It has rather delicate, bright magenta pink flowers with a deeper red blotch, and is quite small in stature, growing only to about a metre tall in 10 years.

12 *Rhododendron* 'Bonfire'



'Bonfire' has brilliant orange-red flowers that contrast with its dull green leaves. In youth it has a very open habit, while with age and in a sunny location it will become dense and compact.

13 *Rhododendron* 'Chionoides'



'Chionoides' has dainty white flowers with a neat, brilliant greenish-yellow blotch in the middle of each. These flowers are held in tight, rounded trusses. With age, the plant will form a broad, but still compact shrub.

15 *Rhododendron cinnabarinum* x

Rhododendron cinnabarinum originates from the Himalayan Mountains and is one of the species most sought after by rhododendron collectors. It is a delicate, elegant plant that has beautiful waxy, tubular flowers that range from mustard yellow to burnt orange to scarlet, and even to plum and lilac purple, in some cases. Ironically, the nectar of these stunning flowers is reputed to be the most poisonous of any rhododendron. In the spring, its young leaves emerge a beautiful waxy blue-green colour and have a pleasant cinnamon-camphor scent as they unfurl.



16 *Rhododendron* 'Crest'

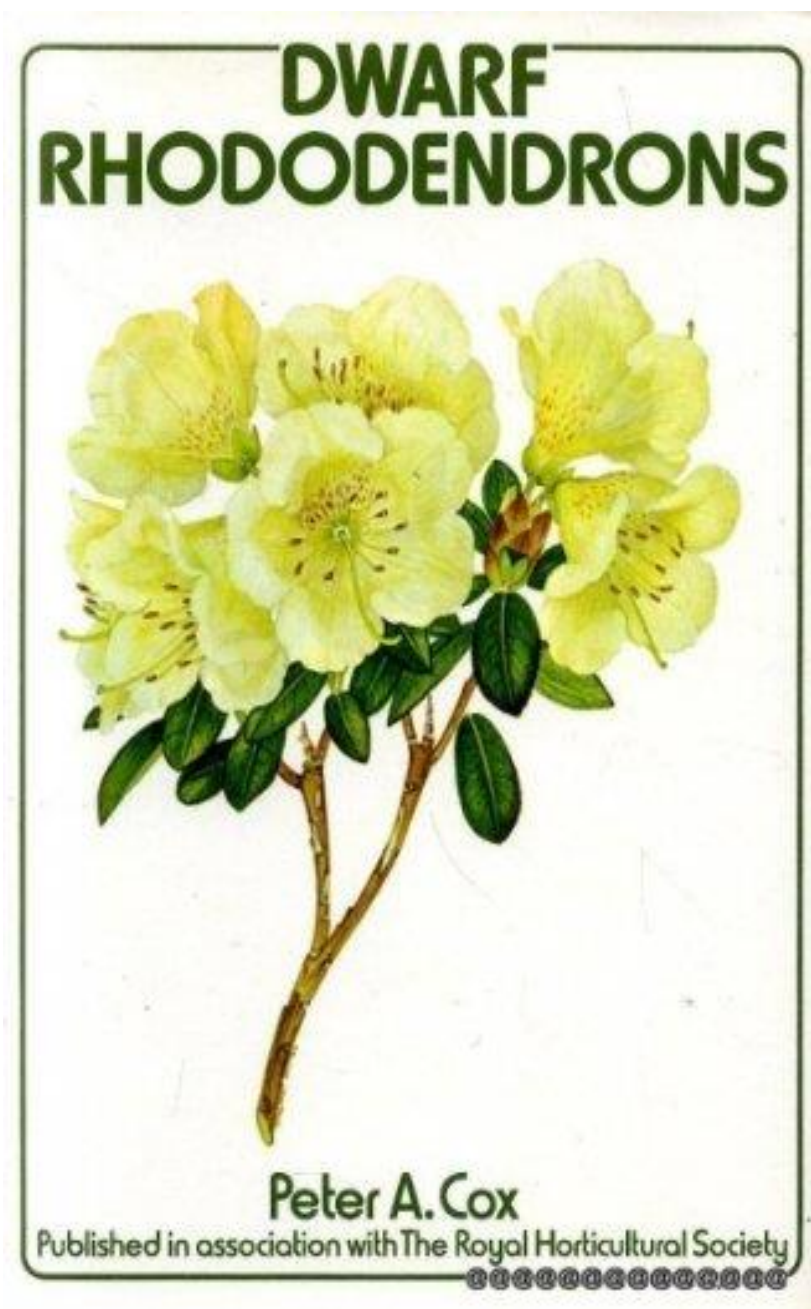
Rhododendron 'Crest' has excellent, large clear yellow flowers, and is, in fact, known as one of the best yellow-flowered rhododendrons available. It can become quite large, and may grow up to 3 metres tall in only 10 years. It is slow to set flower buds in youth, but will bud heavily once it is established.



17 *Rhododendron* 'Cunningham's White'

'Cunningham's White' has fairly small but abundant white flowers which each have a greenish-yellow blotch. They are held in loose trusses of about 8 flowers, each of which opens from a pale pink-tinged bud. Its dark green leaves are quite small compared to those of most rhododendrons, being only about 10cm in length. 'Cunningham's White' is also quite tolerant of poor air quality.





Dwarf Rhododendrons by Peter A. Cox: 296 pages, Published in 1973 in association with the Royal Horticultural Society in Britain.

From the dust jacket: "The author's authoritative text, which includes a complete descriptive list of species and hybrids, is a magnificently illustrated by coloured plates and line drawings by Margaret Stones and by almost 50 photographs."

Peter has authored several other rhododendron books, some of which are in our library. There are several chapters I particularly found informative. These were site selection, preparation with regard to soil type, shade and companion planting, planting and maintenance. He comments on fertilization particularly the augmentation of nitrogen if sawdust (read here bark mulch) is used. Although nearly fifty years old, I think the information is timeless.

Check this out and other books by Cox.

There appears to be few of you that are using the library. Please browse and borrow from the library.

Gerald Nemanishen , Librarian FSRS