



THE YAK

Volume 36, Number 9

December 2022



Thor

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

<http://frasersoutherhododendron.ca>

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

In person 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:



Thor

Elepidote Rhododendron Hybrid

(haematodes x Felis Group)

Shrub: 0.6 x 0.9m in 10 years

Leaves: Dark green (115 x 45 mm), underside with thick indumentum, on a compact, widely branched plant. Similar to 'Mayday' but hardier.

Flower/Truss Description: Bright scarlet with large calyx held in a lax truss of 6-7 per truss. Broadly funnel-shaped (almost flat) (70 x 105mm),

Bloom Time: May

Raised by: L.E. Brandt

Named by: L.E. Brandt (1961)

Introduced by L.E. Brandt (1962)

Sources: *Rhododendron & Azaleas A Colour Guide*, Kenneth Cox;
International Rhododendron Register Second Edition

This Month



No meeting will be held in December

Upcoming Meetings

Date: Wednesday, January 18 at 7:30 pm. Via Zoom

Title: "Our Northern Cascade Rhododendrons: Friends and Family"

David Anderson and Andrew Stern found a mutual interest as naturalists, now taking weekly hikes all over the Northwest exploring and discovering interesting botanical and entomological (insect study) specimens. They will share the results of their plant hunting on the search for the three native rhododendrons found in upper elevations of Washington and Oregon and the plants that typically found accompanying them, along with some fascinating insects.

Date: Wednesday, February 15 at 7:30 pm. Via Zoom

Title: Meerkerk Gardens (Re McClung (President of Meerkerk) and Meerkerk staff)

Meerkerk Rhododendron Gardens, located on Whidbey Island is an independent not-for-profit organization open to the public and managed by the Meerkerk Rhododendron Garden nonprofit, which was established in 2002.

From the Editor

As I sit down today to finish up the YAK and write my editorial I feel the sadness of Harold Fearing's passing and remember how involved he was for years with the Fraser South Rhododendron Society. For anyone that did not see a copy of my note earlier this week Harold has been an integral part of Fraser South having held all executive positions, most recently as our Treasurer and filling in the vacant membership and program director positions.

Harold was passionate about our group working hard to ensure that the group remained engaged during Covid and as we moved forward into a post-Covid phase in the 2022-2023 season. He will be greatly missed by our group. We will continue to think of Ginny and family this holiday season and send our condolences and best wishes. Harold's full obituary follows this editorial.

Please remember to send me any remembrances or stories that you have of Harold as well as any pictures from your garden of a Harold propagated rhododendron(s) for inclusion in the January YAK.

This month's cover rhododendron was chosen for its seasonal colour. The picture of Thor was taken in our garden in May of this year. "In the Garden" which features pictures from the Worden garden is on hiatus this month due to the recent weather and has been replaced with a Christmas Plant trivia quiz. No cheating now and no pressure but the average score for the quiz is 9/10. Good Luck!



Garden cleanup activities ground to a halt with the recent weather. Not only could the garden crew and I not pickup leaves due to the snow, the green waste bins holding the leaves not going on the vegetable garden or in the compost were all full as they were not picked up last week due to the weather. Once the snow dissipates and the bins are empty activities will start again.

Meanwhile, the garden crew takes advantage of the break in activities by settling down for a "long winters nap". This time of the year the sun is low enough to shine into the family room which makes for snug and cozy snoozes,

Our backyard has been a hive of activity the last few weeks with flocks of Robins descending on the Hawthorne tree with its bountiful crop of berries. They were also making regular use of the gurgler for freshening up and drinking as the birdbath has been frozen.

We picked up our Christmas tree last week, a Grand fir this year, and to date it has fallen over twice (once undecorated and once decorated). As it has been standing upright the last two days, I will attempt to replace the fallen ornaments and adjust the remaining ornaments today. Fingers crossed!

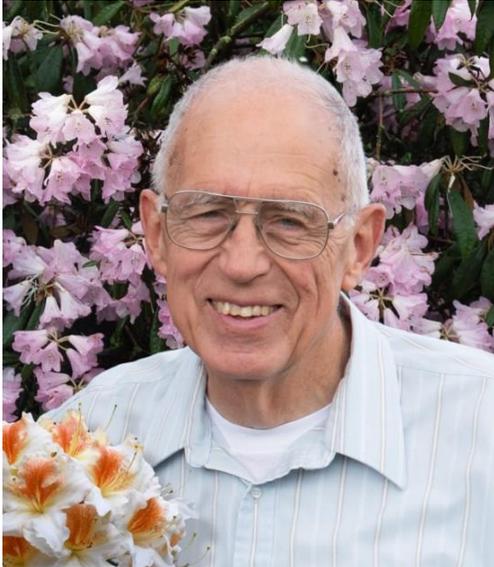
I will not "lecture" this month on volunteering for the groups. As Harold mentioned in his last email to the executive, Fraser South is financially sound, we have speakers and programs lined up for 2023, and we have new members. Let's remember and respect the hard work and passion that Harold brought to our group over many years as we move into 2023.

On that note, I wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy Holiday season.

Maureen

Harold Wayland Fearing

NOVEMBER 9, 1941 – DECEMBER 2, 2022



Harold Fearing, beloved husband of Virginia Griswold Fearing, died on Dec 2, 2022 after a sudden and determined battle with brain cancer, and then COVID. He is survived by Ginny, his wife of 58 years, their son Paul, daughter-in-law Bridget and grandson Colin, all of whom meant the world to him. He is also survived by his brother Franklin Fearing and his sisters Evelyn Dvorak and Julia Thomas.

Except that he planned to spend many more years in retirement, Harold achieved many if not most of his life goals. He enjoyed life. After graduating from the University of Kansas, then Stanford University for a PhD, he achieved recognition as a physicist at TRIUMF (UBC).

On retirement he and Ginny moved to a 40-acre farm where Harold used his science-oriented brain to engage in all aspects of growing species rhododendrons including growing and selling them. All of his thousands of plants were documented with meticulous rigor. He volunteered years of service to the Fraser Valley Rhododendron Society. Harold's large rhododendron garden spoke for him through an amazing variety of colors, textures, shapes and sizes, creating a whole colorful canvas that was admired by and shared with many.

Harold was a dedicated "birder." As a nature lover living in a beautiful part of the world, he and Ginny camped, hiked and backpacked extensively. Harold was a devotee of classical music and opera, and murder mysteries. He knew his way around the kitchen; was a connoisseur of chocolate, especially cakes and cookies and his favorite four cheese sauce and spaghetti. Every spring he commandeered every pot and pan to sterilize huge batches of his hand-mixed rhodie potting soil. Harold was a fine man and will be greatly missed.

At Harold's request, no memorial service will be held. In lieu of flowers, please consider donating in Harold's memory to the Nature Conservancy of Canada (in British Columbia) at www.natureconservancy.ca/donate. The NCC's commitment to preserving British Columbia's wild areas was dear to his heart.

Grateful thanks to the medical teams at Abbotsford Hospital, Royal Columbian Hospital, the Emergency teams (fire truck and ambulances in a snowstorm), and our family physicians for excellent care. You are all so appreciated.

Fond memories and expressions of sympathy may be shared at www.hendersonsabbotsfordfunerals.com for the Fearing family.

Chuck Your Tree for Wildlife!

Editor Note: A reprint for those of us that still purchase a tree every year. (We've been going to the same local tree farm for years).

The Nature Conservancy of Canada suggests leaving your Christmas tree in your backyard – as a gift to wildlife. The organization's senior conservation biologist says leaving the tree in your backyard over the winter can provide "many benefits" for backyard wildlife, as the tree can provide "important habitat for bird populations during the winter months, especially on cold nights and during storms.



He suggests propping it up near another tree, against a fence or lay it in your garden. Get the family involved by redecorating it with pine cones filled with peanut butter, strings of peanuts and suet for birds to enjoy while they shelter in the tree.

"Evergreens offer a safe place for bird to rest while they visit your feeder," Kraus said. "Another benefit is that if you leave the tree in your garden over the summer, it will continue to provide habitat for wildlife and improve your soil as it decomposes."

By spring, he noted, the tree will have lost most of its needles, resembling a "Charlie Brown" Christmas tree. Simply cut the tree branches, lay them where spring flowers are starting to emerge in your garden and place the trunk on soil, but not on top of the flowers.

Kraus says the tree branches and trunk can provide habitat, shelter wildflowers, hold moisture and help build the soil, mimicking what happens with dead trees and branches in the forest. Toads will seek shelter under the log, and insects, including carpenter bees will burrow into the wood.

By Fall, the branches and trunk will begin to decompose and turn into soil. Many of our Christmas trees, particularly spruce and balsam fir have very low rot resistance and break down quickly when exposed to the elements, The more contact the cut branches and trunk have with the ground, the quicker it will decompose. Drilling holes in the tree trunk will speed up that process.

Garden Friends

Ladybugs



Ladybugs (also called lady beetles or lady birds) are among our best-known insects, with their familiar dome shape, orange-red bodies, and black spots. The main physical difference between the different types in Canada is the number of black spots on their wing covers (for example, two-spotted and thirteen-spotted lady beetles).

In the fall, after clustering on outside walls, ladybugs will work their way into dwellings through gaps in doors and window frames, eaves, utility openings, foundations, and wall siding. Once inside, they become confused and gather on the walls, ceilings, and around windows looking for an exit. Most of these stragglers die within a short time, but others may find a safe spot to hibernate in the attic or wall voids, coming out from time to time during mild weather.

Ladybugs produce several generations each year. The adult females lay clusters of 10 to 50 tiny light yellow eggs near aphid colonies. The larvae (hatched eggs) are spiny and mostly black with orange stripes, and look like tiny alligators. These larvae share the adults' insatiable appetite for aphids.

Facts

- Ladybugs are among our most beneficial insects. They are voracious and efficient predators of insect pests, and feed on more than 50 species of aphids. A single ladybug will eat thousands of pest insects in its lifetime, helping to protect home gardens as well as valuable commercial orchards and vegetable crops.
- Ladybugs do not sting, transmit disease, or infest food supplies. Of the more than 450 species of ladybugs in North America, only three types feed on plants.
- Ladybugs can live up to two or three years if conditions are right.
- During hibernation, ladybugs feed on their stored fat.
- The spots on a ladybug fade as the ladybug gets older.
- Ladybugs can secrete a fluid from joints in their legs, which gives them a foul taste. Their colouring is likely a reminder to any animals that their taste will be foul. A threatened ladybug may play dead and secrete the unappetizing fluid to protect itself.
- Ladybugs chew from side to side and not up and down like people do.
- A ladybug beats its wings 85 times a second when it flies.
- Aphids are a ladybug's favourite food.

Source: Canada.ca; Photo: S. Kenworthy



The following articles originally appeared in the Fraser South Newsletter, December 2007 by Norma Senn



Those of you who were at last year's Christmas party will remember that Colleen came up with a new party game where we had to supply hybrid Rhody names to complete her story. The following is a direct steal of Colleen's idea, so – blame her. Merry Christmas!

Having attended many FSRS December parties (and June picnics), I can say with confidence, that most of us enjoy our Christmas Cheer – and, whether it's in the form of Apple Brandy, Brandywine or Sparkling Burgundy, we all leave with a nice Warm Glow. I've noticed we like our snacks too, so good menu additions include Peppermint Twists and Sugar and Spice Cookies.

One of the things I like best at this time of the year is that the season is full of Glad Tidings, like those first heralded with the appearance of the Royal Star when the Yaku Angels sang Hallelujah, be of good Cheer, with Peace on Earth.

Most of us spend time thinking about finding perfect family gifts. I don't know if they really like it very much, but lots of Dads are destined to receive some Old Spice. Mothers, of course, get Perfume, and for children, a Teddy Bear is always a popular gift.

Family activities are important too, and many of us like to watch the classic movie, 'A Christmas Carol' by Charles Dickens. In addition to the usual shows, you can also watch Olive, The Other Reindeer, a "new" children's classic. And, did you know that when he was just a fawn and before his nose turned red, Rudolph's Orange nose still glowed? Perhaps your family likes to gather together to read stories like

Up the Garden Path

It's That Time of Year Again

Hansel and Gretsel to your children and grandchildren.

While we're out shopping, the Salvation Army Bell Ringers will be using lots of Jingle Bells to collect money for those in need. However, such activities are weather dependent and a Snowstorm may keep us all at home.

At the North Pole, it's a busy time for Santa and his helpers, but if there's lots of Arctic Snow, Rose Elf and her friends will take some time to play, making lots of Boule de Neige for a friendly snowball fight. Here on the Coast, we usually have a green Christmas, so for us, Falling Snow at Christmas makes for a very magical Evening Glow.

Christmas Cheer: early, pink flowered *caucasicum* hybrid.



Apple Brandy: compact Yak hybrid with silver tomentum and silvery pink flowers.

Brandywine: tall, cream coloured flowers edged in pink, to 3 feet (*pubescens* x *keiskei*).



Sparkling Burgundy: a May blooming hybrid of 'Purple Splendour' x *macrophyllum*.

Warm Glow: the pale orange flowers with darker throat are held in a lax truss; a cross between *dichroanthum* and 'Vida'.

Peppermint Stick: as you might guess, it has white flowers edged with red

Sugar and Spice: Greer describes this as a fantastic hybrid! Bright creamy white flowers with a golden brown blotch; dark, slender leaves (Greer really likes this hybrid, just read his comments!)

Cookie: fragrant, large flowers of rose spotted maroon.

Glad Tidings: large flowers of blended cream and pink; also has large leaves ('China' x *williamsianum*).

Royal Star: 'Moser's Maroon' x unknown; deep purple flowers with dark blotch; plant is compact in habit.

Yaku Angel: lovely plant with narrow, recurved leaves; tan indumentum; flowers are pink in bud and open to clear white.



Hallelujah: another one that Greer really likes; good foliage and handsome plant; bright rose red flowers.



Cheer: a vigorous grower with glossy green leaves; flowers are pink.



Peace: (*rigidum* x *concatenans*); small plant with flowers held in a lax truss.

Old Spice: large, scented pink flowers shading to apricot (*decorum* x 'Azor').

Perfume: another fragrant hybrid, this time a *fortunei* cross. Best grown with overhead shade.

Teddy Bear: a *bureavii* x *yak* cross; lovely cinnamon-red indumentum; soft pink flowers on a compact plant.



Charles Dickens: a *catawbiense* hybrid; slow growing and hardy. Flowers are dark red and spotted.



Olive: one of our very early hybrids; pink flowers, a *moupinense* x *dauricum* hybrid.



Rudolph's Orange: flowers are light orange with pink shading.

Hansel and Gretsel: Sister seedlings, a Lem cross between *bureavii* and 'Fabia'. Both have good foliage with nice indumentum, and flowers are orange with pastel shading.



Bellringer: soft, creamy white flowers on an attractive plant.



Jingle Bells: flowers open reddish orange then change to yellow; a fairly low-growing plant.



Snowstorm: another yak hybrid; the flowers are fragrant, white with rose spotting.

Arctic Snow: late May for bloom; flowers are white with yellow markings; fragrant.

Rose Elf: a sweet, small plant; flowers are orchid pink; a *racemosum* x *pemakoense* hybrid



Boule de Neige: a tough plant, cold hardy and also able to tolerate heat; flower trusses look like snowballs.



Falling Snow: a yak hybrid with white flowers, many flowers/truss; plant habit is good.

Evening Glow: compact growth, late blooming time, and resistance to heat stress make this a good yellow.

Norma Senn



Christmas Plants! Trivia Quiz

Many different plants are used to symbolize christmas in different pts of the world. Can you correct match the plant (from choices) with its description? Answers at the end of the YAK. (No Peeking!)

CHOICES

Holly Radish Christmas Cactus Amaryllis Ivy Evergreen Tree Rosemary
Poinsettia Mistletoe Pomegranite

QUESTIONS

1. Evergreen creeping plant, in family "Araliaceae"

2. Parasitic plant found in trees and shrubs, in family "Santalaceae"

3. Plant with glossy leaves and sharp spines, from the family "Aquifoliaceae" and genus "Ilex aquifolium"

4. Plant from Mexico with star-shaped leaves, from family "Euphorbiaceae", species "E. pulcherrima"

5. Plant with seasonal long, hanging blooms, member of "Cactaceae" family

6. Fir, spruce, pine, balsam plant, from division "Coniferophyta"

7. Perennial herb plant, native to the Mediterranean area, from family "Lamiaceae"

8. Plant derived from flowering bulb, from order "Asparagales"

9. Tree or shrub plant in Middle East that bears fruit, from order "Myrtales"

10. Root vegetable plant used in celebration in Mexico, from the "Brassicaceae" family

Source: funtrivia.com

Jim Barlup Hybrids

Picture credit : Jim Barlup



Vanilla Spice (Silk Ribbon x White Cinnamon)



Vanilla Torch (Capistrano x Tia)



Velvet Dawn (Maverick x Orchid Bouquet)



Velvet Dreams (Hotei x Brandts x Tropicanna x Hills Low Red)



Velvet Morning (summer sunrise x Plum Passion)



Velvet Touch (Terra x Bergs Yellow x r. proteoides)



Vera Fitzpatrick (Burgundy Mist x Hollis Hope)



Violet Breeze (Fancy x r.yakushimanum x Frank Galsworthy x Purple Splendor)



Violet Dreams (Plum High x Jonathan Shaw)



Violet Magic (Purple Amethyst x Plum Passion x Hollis Hope)



Violet Mist (r.yakushimanum x Frank Galsworthy x Purple Splendor)



Violet Touch (violet Mist x Plum Passion)

Christmas Trivia Quiz: Answers

1. **Ivy** - Many ancient peoples have seen some sort of significance in ivy. The Romans believed it symbolized Bacchus, their god of wine, while the ancient Greeks presented it to newly married couples as a symbol of fidelity. Evergreen ivy is especially resistant to frost, and lives for quite a long while.

While Christians used holly to represent Christ, ivy was used to represent the Virgin Mary, as it symbolizes her eternity, as well as her complete faithfulness to God.

2. **Mistletoe** - The ancient Druids would hang mistletoe in their homes to bring good luck and ward off evil spirits. Norsemen used the plant as a sign of love and friendship (after Loki tricked Hodur into murdering Balder with an arrow made of mistletoe). Scandinavia is likely to have been the area where "kissing under the mistletoe" originated. Because of the pagan meaning and usage, it took a while for the Christian church to agree to its use as a symbol. During the Middle Ages, the plant was associated with fertility, and it eventually became a good excuse for young men and women to sneak a kiss!
3. **Holly** - Often called "Christ's thorn", the use of holly, which maintains its colors in the winter, to symbolize eternal life and protection from evil spirits, dates all the way back to the ancient Druids, who even wore it in their hair! It was adopted by Christians as a symbol of Christ; the red berries represent the blood of Jesus, and the sharp spines depict the crown of thorns. The shape of the leaves, believed to resemble flames, also represents God's burning love.
4. **Poinsettia** - Displaying the perfect Christmas colors, the poinsettia was introduced to the United States in 1825 by Joel Roberts Poinsett, who was the first U.S. ambassador to Mexico. The star-shaped pattern of the leaves is said to represent the Star of Bethlehem. Interestingly, the plant was also important to the Aztecs, who used it for red dye, and as a medicine to reduce fevers.
5. **Christmas Cactus** - Although it appears that a Christmas cactus flowers at Christmas, it actually blooms between Thanksgiving and Christmas in the United States. There are many "Cactaceae" species that are sold as Christmas cacti, so the blooms, which are said to resemble hanging Christmas ornaments, come in a variety of colors.
6. **Evergreen Tree** - An evergreen tree, either cut or growing, has been the center of Christmas celebrations since - well Roman times, when the celebration was called the Saturnalia. Romans would decorate trees where they grew with red and purple ribbons, as well as fruit, but they would also bring evergreen boughs into their homes, looking forward to spring after the long winter solstice.

The ancient Celtic peoples held many of the native evergreen trees as sacred; the cedar tree was called the "Tree of Life", and the pine tree was "the sweetest in the woods".

The first documented use of evergreen trees as Christmas trees was recorded in 1441, in Tallinn, Estonia.

7. **Rosemary** - While you might not associate rosemary with Christmas, there is a story that the plant is included in nativity scenes in the Mediterranean. According to legend, the clothes of Baby Jesus were dried on a rosemary bush; Christians believe that it is good luck to smell rosemary at Christmas, and bushes in some areas are pruned and sold to look like Christmas trees.
8. **Amaryllis** - An amaryllis is a beautiful flowering bulb that will bloom for Christmas if potted in early to mid-November. Also called the Christmas lily, an amaryllis bloom will last for quite a long time if given proper care. Consequently it has become the symbol of success, and because the bulb can last for seventy-five years, it is also the symbol of prosperity.

Although there is a story from Greek mythology about the lovely shepherd woman, Amaryllis, who fell in love with a man who loved only flowers, it became a popular houseplant in Victorian times.

9. **Pomegranate** - A symbol of prosperity and ambition for the ancient Egyptians, pomegranate was "the fruit of the dead" to the ancient Greeks. To the ancient Hebrews, pomegranates were symbols that the promised land was indeed fertile, and it is said that even Solomon's Temple was decorated with carvings of the fruit. Pomegranates became an important symbol used by Italian artists during Renaissance; the fruit burst open is a symbol of the suffering and resurrection of Christ.

In the Eastern Orthodox Church, however, the fruit is used to symbolize the sweetness of the heaven. Today in the Middle East, the pomegranate is the symbol of prosperity.

10. **Radish** - The Night of the Radishes (Noche de Rábanos) is celebrated in Oaxaca, Mexico on December 23, as part of its annual Christmas celebration. Large radishes are carved by competitors to make scenes that are then judged. It is estimated that in 2014, approximately twelve tons of radishes were used in the event; the plants are locally grown in Oaxaca. Traditionally the nativity scene carved out of radishes was a common entry; however, there are no particular rules as to what type of themed display can be entered.