



THE YAK

Volume 36, Number 2

February 2022



R. augustinii ssp. *chasmathum*

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

<http://frasersoutherhododendron.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, and August).

In person meetings are not being held at this
time.

Cover:



R. augustinii ssp. *chasmanthum*

Rhododendron subsection: Triflora

Height: 1-7m, a usually erect shrub. Branchlets often hairy, young foliage usually covered in downy hairs, often tinted red.

Leaves: 3.3-12 x 1.1-4.5 cm, lanceolate to oblong and somewhat obovate; lower surface with unequal, distant, golden or brown scales, midrib usually hairy for a long part off its length; petiole sometimes fringed with long hairs.

Inflorescence: 2-6 flowered.

Corolla: widely funnel-shaped, 2-4.3cm long, pale, or blue, deep or pale lavender-blue to mauve or violet-mauve, purplish-red, pink or white, blotched or spotted olive green, purple or ochre; calyx usually fringed with long hairs; stamens of various colors, pubescent at base.

Distribution: Yunnan, S.E. Tibet & W. Sichuan to the south and west of locations for ssp. *augustinii*.

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

This Month

Date: Wednesday, February 16, 2022 at 7:30 pm.

Place: Zoom meeting from the comfort of your own home

TITLE: "On the Trail for Great Plant Picks" – Gwen Odermatt

"On the Trail for Great Plant Picks" is a visual journey of the way GPP looks for plants to consider for their lists. "On the Trail" tells the stories of the plants, the places and the process GPP follows.

Gwen is a life-long gardener who, as a young child, was fascinated with plants and bugs. She became a discerning observer of how plants grow in harmony with other plants, insects and the diversity of the natural world. This led to a degree in science at the University of Alberta. For the last 25 years she has operated Petals and Butterflies, a farm nursery that specializes in growing plants that attract butterflies and other beneficial wildlife to gardens. The nursery offers an always interesting collection of rare and unusual ornamental plants that she sells via consignment; for example, her plants can be found in the perennial section of the VanDusen Plant Sale.

She is on the Selection Committee for Great Plants Picks, teaches the Advanced Master Gardener Right Plant/Right Place course, is a member of the Vancouver Hardy Plant Group, The Alpine Garden Club, and is a long-time member of the South Surrey Garden Club.

Her garden has been open for local, national, and international tours, and is open to garden clubs by request. Gwen is a Langley resident, married to Paul, a mother of three, and a grandmother of five.

Next Month

Date: Wednesday, March 16, 2022 at 7:30 pm.

Place: Zoom meeting from the comfort of your own home

Title: Annual AGM (see the YAK for details).

2021 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:	Gerry Nemanishen	604-826-0166
	Robert Talbot	604-720-0134
	Nancy Moore	604-859-3690
Programme:	Jim Worden	604-541-4754
Membership:	Evelyn Jensen	604-857-5663
Newsletter:	Maureen Worden	604-541-4754
Librarian:	Gerald Nemanishen	604-826-0166
Website:	Maureen Worden	604-541-4754
Hospitality:	Vacant	
BCCGC Liaison:	Vacant	

Reminders - !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

WE ARE ACTIVELY LOOKING FOR MEETING SPEAKERS. PLEASE SEND YOUR SUGGESTIONS TO THE YAK EDITOR.

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

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

From the President



Is it possible that spring might be peeking around the corner?

I'm trying desperately not to get my hopes up just yet. But when I see the Hamamelis in all their golden splendor, carpets of snowdrops glistening under the bare Hydrangeas, and the cheerful pink Cyclamen nodding their dainty heads under the big Rhodos, I am delighted and hopeful. PJM's buds are swelling with anticipation here but I imagine some of you have even earlier ones in color already (send pics to Maureen).

New shoots are peeping up in the perennials in my 'rhodo sale nursery' in the back lane, and big fat buds are inching up every day in the Helleborus' Ice and Roses Red' - it was right out in the open in a pot all winter and didn't even blink - good snow cover is such a blessing! Pussywillows are furring out everywhere, and I just had to get a black one for myself - so dramatic in the sun with the red stamens, and I'm hoping to get the pink one when new stock arrives. And don't get me started on all the new Primula varieties coming out now. Let the shopping begin!

As spring approaches, my thoughts tend to being hopeful that we can finally get back to in-house meetings and hold our plant sale and picnic again. I think that as 'The Omicron' starts to wane as predicted by some, that with careful planning and organization it may be possible.

From the President cont'd

Let's all be ready to volunteer to help if that becomes a thing so we can make the best of it. Line up your pots and tags to be ready to get plants to share just in case. Our Zoom meetings are progressing well so far, the AGM is a go for March, and Maureen is sending out a message to get your pics to Nancy ASAP for a members' presentation. We'll all enjoy them I'm sure. Take advantage of these sunny days to search out what's getting busy in the garden that could be divided or removed to add to the sale.

Respectfully, *Colleen B.*

P.S (saw this somewhere, made me laugh). "Gardening season is off to a great start – I planted myself in front of the TV 4 weeks ago and I've already grown noticeably" (bring on digging, pruning and raking!)



Annual General Meeting (AGM)



The Fraser South AGM will take place via Zoom, Wednesday, March 16th at 7:30.

The meeting will commence with the usual AGM related items.

For the presentation section of the AGM, Nancy Moore has kindly volunteered to put together a member garden presentation for our enjoyment after the business part of the meeting has concluded. Nancy is asking that members send her up to 10 pictures of their garden (jpeg format please!) no later than March 5th. She will then do her magic for the AGM. Whether your garden is big, patio or balcony size don't be shy, submit your pictures!

Unfortunately as we watch this presentation, we'll have to rely on our own individual "Just Desserts". Maybe we should take a minute and "display" our Just Dessert Extravaganzas?

Plan on joining us that evening and enjoy rarely seen views and perhaps never seen before pictures of your fellow member's gardens!



Note: Should there be a change in circumstances that allow for an in-person AGM, members will be notified prior to the meeting.

From the Editor

I concur with Colleen, BRING ON SPRING! I've had enough of the rain, snow, wind and fog that seem to go right through you to the bones. (Must be age talking!).

While wandering through the yard wondering if I would find any signs of life for "In the Garden", I noticed that overall the rhododendrons appeared to have survived the cold well. Only a couple are showing signs of "wind/cold" burn. One was in a pot on the south facing patio, the other in a bed on the north side of the yard facing east. Both continue to have some green foliage near the bottom that I assume was under snow that provided protection from the wind and cold. Buds appear to be solid so it will be interesting to see if the damage goes beyond the leaves.



As most of you are aware, January's meeting had a presentation change due to the sudden passing of Dick Cavender our scheduled speaker. Dick is honored for his life of service to the ARS in the February newsletter of the Portland ARS chapter of which he was a member. Definitely worth a read and can be found at: www.rhodies.org/newsletter/2022/2022-02.pdf

I'm a fan of the British TV show "The Repair Shop". People bring their sentimental treasures in for restoration by some of Britain's leading skilled craftsmen. A recent episode highlighted the restoration of a Withering Botanical Microscope. Thought it was interesting and perhaps something used by early plant hunters. Hope you enjoy reading about it this month.



A friend recently captured a picture of what appears to be an upside down rainbow. Ever see one? They're called *circumzenithal arcs*, and they're not really rainbows. Instead, they're caused by ice crystals in the upper atmosphere. These arcs are related to the frequently seen halos around the sun or the moon. For more info: earthsky.org/space/what-makes-a-halo-around-the-moon.

Anyway, back to the garden. *R. rirrei* is starting to make an appearance and I suspect with the forecasted warmer temperatures will be fully out in the next couple of weeks. *R. praevernium* that had a few blooms out in December prior to the cold, decided to hold tight on any more blooms once the cold and snow hit. All remaining blooms are budding up nicely. The daffodils are showing about 4 inches and the potted tulips have done their initial peek through the soil. This seasons Helleborus growth is up with the flowers on the verge of opening. All of this and the multitude of snow drops out in the yard bring a welcome reminder that spring is on the way.

Our backyard has been curiously bunny free lately. I don't know if it's a result of the numerous yard patrols of our newest garden crew member or the frequent presence of Barred Owls in the neighbourhood. Perhaps the combination of both have provided the required deterrent. The newest team member continues to train for gardening duties and has progressed well with the removal of fallen sticks and branches from the woods but would rather stalk the birds in the bushes and at the feeders and run at them causing them to scatter.

Join us this month for "On the Trail for Great Plant Picks" by local Gwen Odermatt. It promises to be a good one and with spring approaching, I'm sure will provide some great ideas for our gardens. Hope you can join us AND don't forget to mark the AGM on your calendar AND send those garden pics to Nancy Moore.

Maureen Worden

Botanical Microscope

Dr. William Withering was the author of a 1776 book entitled ***A Botanical Arrangement of all the Vegetables Naturally Growing in Great Britain***, which included the design of an elementary microscope useful in the observation of plant material.

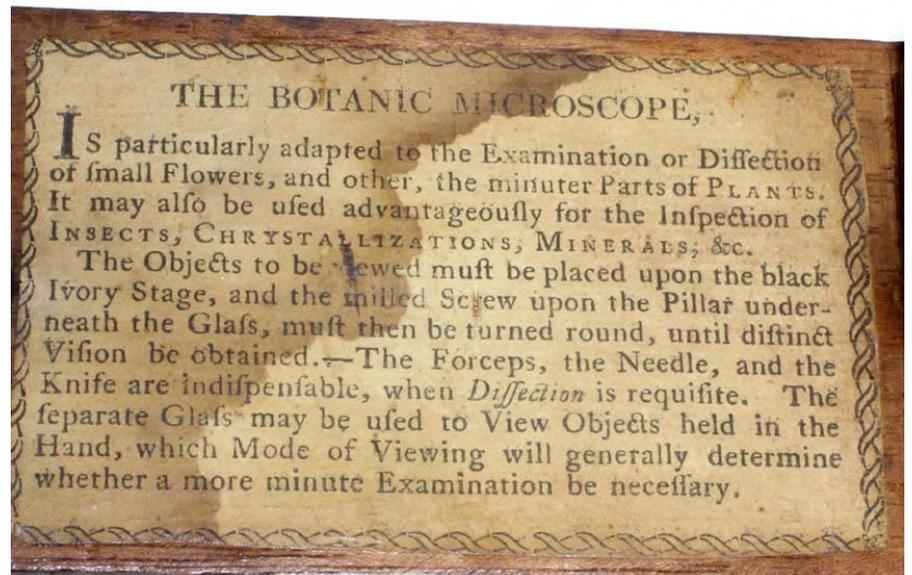


This simple instrument consists of a single lens mounted in a brass disc and capable of magnifying the specimen from three to five times. The brass lens holder is mounted on a narrow rod, which also is used to attach the specimen stage that is designed to support a leaf or stem from a plant.

Focus is achieved by sliding the lens up and down on the support rod. The entire instrument can be packed away for storage into the wooden box. This creates a convenient pocket-size microscope for field work. The microscope was also equipped with an additional (hand) lens, a forceps, pointer, and lancet.

Instructions for the use of the microscope were included on the lid of the box. Editor note: (Remember when reading that a “f” is an “s”).

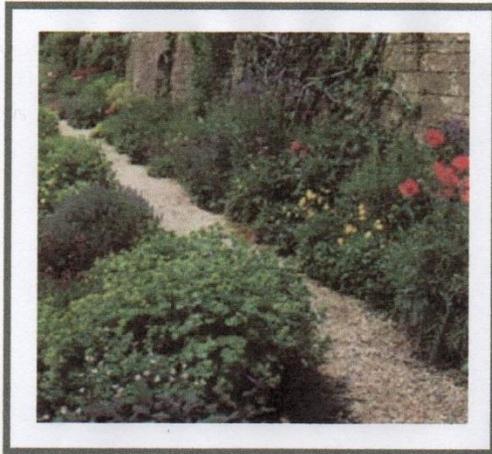
Dr. Withering is famous in medical circles as the discoverer of Foxglove as a source of *Digitalis*, an effective treatment for what was then called “dropsy”. He started to study this in 1775 and published a thorough publication and how to safely use it in 1785.



From the Archives



The following articles originally appeared in the Fraser South Newsletter, February 2005 by Norma Senn



Up the Garden Path with Small Trees for Rhododendron Gardens

February 2005

Small trees make wonderful companions for rhododendrons. As well as offering flowers, fruit, fall colour, bark and vertical interest to the garden, they can also provide overhead shade without overwhelming or out-competing the rhododendron under story. I consider trees to be small if they don't exceed much more than 30 feet in height at maturity, or I sometimes delude myself into including trees that can be taller, but are so slow growing that they remain "small"

for decades. Whenever possible, I like to choose plants that add at least two elements to a garden, for example, nice flowers and interesting bark or good fall colour.

In the last few years, I've come to admire the Callery Pear, *Pyrus calleryana*, which is now often planted locally as a street tree. Once established, it tolerates some drought and city conditions. The most commonly planted cultivar is 'Bradford', but other selections are available, like 'Aristocrat', 'Redspire' and 'Capital'. All of these trees just make it into my height definition, reaching between 30 to 35 feet with age.

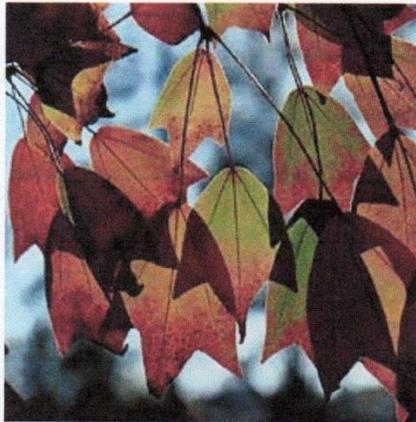
Before they leaf out in April, Callery Pears are covered in clouds of white flowers, then in the fall, the foliage turns a beautiful shade of deep red. Written descriptions state that trees don't bear much fruit, but the specimens I've seen in our area this past fall bore an abundance of marble-sized, yellow-brown fruit. While it is a true pear, the fruits are of no interest to us for either ornamental or eating purposes, but birds adore them. For best growth, trees need deep, well-drained soils and full sun.

The overall shape of the trees varies depending on the cultivar grown, but with age, *P.c.* 'Bradford' is broadly pyramidal. It also has some resistance to the bacterial disease, fireblight. The other cultivars have been selected for slightly different growth habits, but they are somewhat more susceptible to fireblight. This isn't usually considered to be a serious disease in our area.

While there aren't many disease or insect pests that affect *P. calleryana*, locally there is concern about a disease problem called Pear Trellis Rust. As is the case with many rusts, this disease has two hosts, in this case, Pears and Junipers. The rust is not a serious threat to ornamental pears, but it can cause unsightly fungal fruiting bodies on junipers, and of more concern is that the disease could spread into commercial pear fruit orchards. So, in order to protect both pears and junipers, these two species should not be planted together as the disease can complete its life cycle by moving between the two species. If you are interested in planting a Callery Pear, try to make sure it is at least 250 feet away from the nearest juniper.



Pyrus calleryana 'Bradford'



Acer buergeranum

We are fortunate in being able to grow many species of small maples for use as companion plants for rhododendrons; *Acer palmatum*, *japonicum*, *dauricum* and *buergerianum* (syn. *buergerianum*) are all examples. There are many local gardens that are as famous for their fine displays of these maples as they are for their rhododendrons.

There can be variations, but the small maples generally have good fall colour and attractive growing habits. Many selections are available that have variegated leaves or attractive bark. For example, *A. palmatum* 'Sangokaku' has lovely green leaves with red margins and the young bark is bright coral. Of course, there are lots of red leaved forms too.

At the coast, while small maples can withstand full sun if there is sufficient water, most do better with partial shade. They are not drought tolerant, so soils should have some organic matter to help retain moisture while supplying good drainage. Summer watering may be essential for tree survival and mulching

the soil around the root zone may be beneficial. The small maples often develop leaf scorch during the latter part of the summer if they get too dry. This begins with the leaf margins drying out, then entire leaves dry up and premature leaf drop may occur.

There can be problems with scale and aphids, but these are manageable. The most serious problem that can arise with any kind of maple is the fungal disease, Verticillium Wilt. This soil borne fungus infects the xylem, plugging up the water conducting tissue which gradually leads to death of the plant. Death can occur quickly, or it may take a couple of seasons. Often, the first indication of infection is noticed when individual branches suddenly flag, then wilt. The disease often hits one side of the tree, and if you peel back the bark to examine the wood, you will see that the underlying wood is a dark olive green to brown colour instead of the creamy-white or light green colour it should be. There isn't much that can be done to control the disease, however, there are reports that recently infected trees might be saved by applying liberal doses of a soluble nitrogen fertilizer early in the growing season. This treatment is thought to stimulate new leaf growth which in turn stimulates the production of new sapwood, and if done quickly enough, the new sapwood walls off the infected wood.

Sadly, if a tree is heavily infected, there isn't much that can be done to control verticillium wilt. To add insult to injury, this fungus can infect a wide range of plant materials. In the event of a plant dying of the disease, you should replant with a species known to be unaffected by the disease. Lists of resistant species are available in good plant encyclopaedias.

Another good choice for a small tree is *Franklinia alatamaha*. I saw a couple of very lovely specimens in full bloom this past fall, and the large, clear white flowers are spectacular. These deciduous trees also produce good fall colour. It is usually a multi-stemmed tree that grows to between 20 to 30 feet in height. It has a fascinating history. Plant explorers, John and William Bartram, found a small grove of trees growing along the banks of the Alatamaha River in Georgia in 1765. William Bartram returned to the site a few years later and collected seeds which were used to start trees for their Philadelphia garden. They named the tree in honour of their friend Benjamin Franklin. All trees are descended from this original seed collection as *Franklinia* has never been found in the wild since 1803. The Bartrams are credited with saving the species from extinction.

For best growth, *Franklinia* should be grown in acid soil with excellent drainage and even soil moisture. It does not have drought tolerance, so should be watered regularly if necessary. *Franklinia* can tolerate full sun, but light overhead shade is beneficial and while reliable hardy in our area, protection from wind is recommended. Light mulching is also beneficial.

There are no particular pests or disease problems with this plant, although I have heard from some people that it sulks for a couple of years after transplanting. It also doesn't start to flower freely until it has become well established.



Franklinia alatamaha

Norma Senn

From the Garden



Cyclamen coum



Hamamelis x intermedia 'Jelena'



r. rirrei

From Nancy Moore's Garden



Iris unguicularis



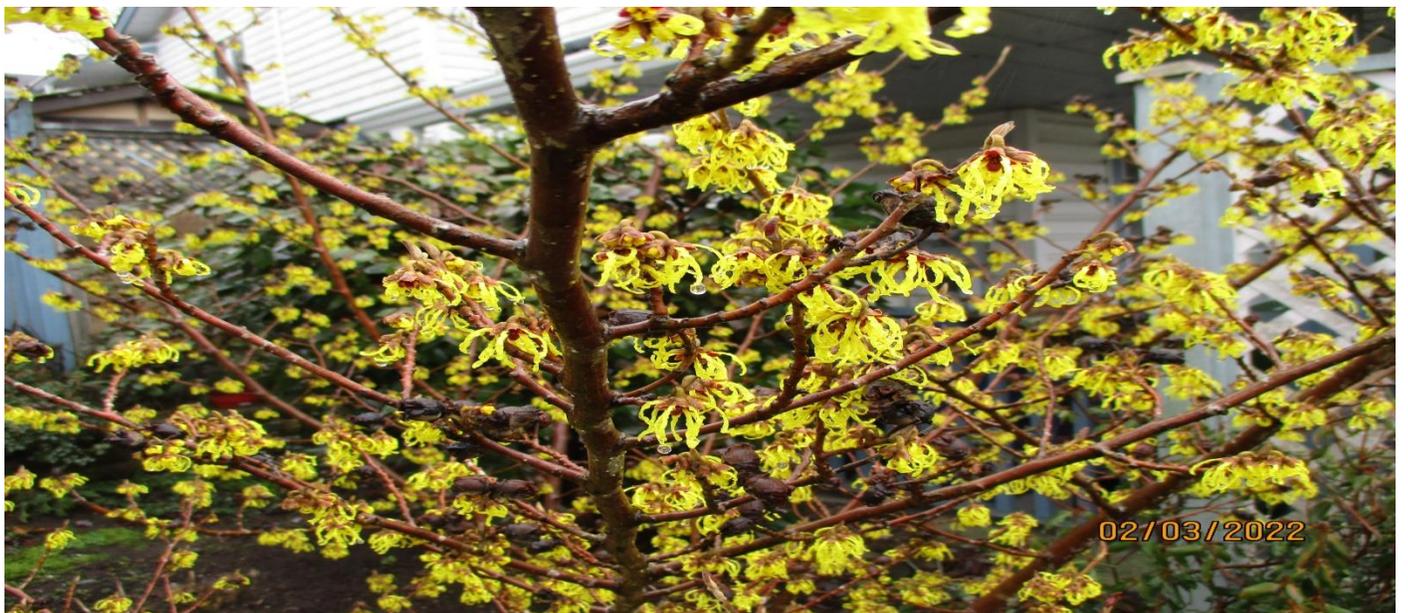
Erathis hyemalis (winter aconite)



Cyclamen coum



Erica 'Mary Helen'



Hamamelis 'Arnold Promise'

Jim Barlup Hybrids

Picture credit : Jim Barlup



Mrs. Carolina Lago (Maverick x Crimson Constellation)



Nadia (Hotei x Virginia Richards x Hawks Group)



Night Melody (Purple Twilight x Black Widow)



Night Music (Jonathan Shaw x Black Adder)



Night Wind (Jonathan Shaw x Black Adder?)



North Wind (Scintillation x Snow Candle)



Only Yours (Terra x Winter Spice)



Orange Amber (Dazzler x Hills Low Red)



Orange Prelude (Lems Tangerine x Lems Cameo x Ken Janick x Brandts Tropicanna)



Orchid Mist (r. yakushimanum x Frank Galsworthy)



Palouse (Hotei x Lems Cameo)



Patrica Hansen (Burgundy Mist x Hollis Hope)