



THE YAK

Volume 36, Number 3

March 2022



Bo-Peep

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:



Bo-Peep

Lepidote rhododendron: *R. lutescens* x
R. moupinense

Height: shrub to 1.2m

Leaves: ovate-acuminate to oblong-ovate, up to 65 x 35mm, dark glossy green and thinly scaly above, more densely scaly below, on an upright somewhat rangy plant.

Inflorescence: 2-6 flowered.

Flowers: 2-3 flowers per truss (shoots with a terminal and several auxiliary buds), flat funnel-shaped, 30 x 45mm, creamy yellow, shadowed externally and with a ray of lemon yellow spots in the throat. Calyx very small.

Early into flower, so needs shelter, but one of the few very early yellow hybrids.

Registered, introduced, and named by: L. de Rothschild, 1934

Source:
- *The Encyclopedia of Rhododendron Species* by Peter A. Cox & Kenneth N.E. Cox
- *The International rhododendron Register and Checklist Second Edition 2004*, The Royal Horticultural Society

This Month

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

Place: Zoom meeting from the comfort of your own home

TITLE: Annual AGM

Next Month

Date: Wednesday, April 20, 2022 at 7:30 pm.

Place: Zoom meeting from the comfort of your own home

Title: "Gardening with Rhododendrons" by Chris Southwick

Chris will provide some basic information about rhododendrons and azaleas and explain why they are such popular plants to grow. Using her own garden as an example, she will discuss conditions for growing these plants successfully and how they can be used in gardens. She will end her presentation by sharing the answers to the questions that she gets asked most frequently.

Bio: Chris Southwick had the good fortune to be born into a family that loves the outdoors, gardening, and rhododendrons in particular. Her grandparents were Ted and Mary Greig, who were pioneering rhododendron and alpine plant enthusiasts on Vancouver Island. They passed on an appreciation for plants to their son Jim and their daughter-in-law Jean, Chris's mother.

Chris has been gardening all of her adult life. When she moved to Nanaimo from the Fort Nelson, B. C. area in 1992 she purchased a property just off of Hammond Bay Road and began gardening with rhododendrons in earnest at that time having purchased some lovely rhodos with that property.

.... Continued on page 3

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



The pussywillows have opened – it is now officially spring! I am so enamoured of them, and now my black one is blowing my socks off – the first push of pollen is a beautiful pink over the black 'fur', that matures to a rich cream rather than the usual yellow – MAGICAL!

On a Rhodo note, nothing has cracked in our yard yet, but we just got in a big bath of beauties at work – The R. 'Petite Nancy Jean' and R. 'Seta' are opening with exquisite color, just the perfect match with Forsythia and dark purple Crocus. I hope you've all sent some great pix to Nancy for the show – we need that.

This year's AGM will be quick and painless, so make sure you come and vote. There will be some awards, a bit of an executive shuffle, but still a couple of openings that need to be filled – we'd really appreciate if someone or some people will step up to give one a try.

Now get out and enjoy this glorious sunshine, but take some allergy pills because the trees they are a-bloomin' (especially the alders, hazels, and yews, and the maples aren't far behind). See you all on the 16th.

Respectfully, *Colleen B.*

AGM - Proposed Slate of Officers for 2022:

President: Gerry Nemanishen
Past President: Colleen Bojczuk
Vice-President: Jim Worden
Secretary: Barb Mathias
Treasurer: Harold Fearing
Program: Jim Worden, but vacant soon
Director 2nd year: Nancy Moore
Director 2nd year: Rob Talbot
Director 1st year: Colleen Bojczuk

AGM – Proposed Appointments:

Membership: Evelyn Jensen, but vacant after June
Newsletter: Maureen Worden
Hospitality: vacant
Website: Maureen Worden
Librarian: Gerry Nemanishen
BCCGC Liason: vacant

Chris Southwick Bio cont'd



Joining the Nanaimo Rhododendron Society in 1994, Chris became involved with that chapter and served as program chair, treasurer, vice-president, president, and board member for most of the years since joining the Society. She has co-chaired the annual Show and Sale, judged shows for other Vancouver Island clubs, and was co-chair of the 2012 Fall ARS Regional Conference. She was honoured with the NRS Bronze medal in 2008.

As a rhododendron species proponent, Chris currently serves on a committee that helped create the Greig Rhododendron Species Garden at Milner Gardens and Woodland in beautiful Qualicum Beach. After retirement from being a school administrator she became a certified Master Gardener to carry on learning about plants and giving back to the gardening community. She is currently the Vice-President of the Nanaimo Rhododendron Society and Past President of the Vancouver Island Master Garden Association. She is also on the Board of Milner Garden and Woodland and the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden.

Chris built a new home in 2008 on just over half an acre. She enjoys sharing her garden of several hundred rhododendrons, including many dwarf species rhodos, many native flowering plants, ferns, Japanese maples, dogwoods, primulas and vegetables.

From the Editor

Perhaps I was too convinced that spring had arrived early when the warm weather stretch in February signalled *R. ririi* and *R. praevernum* that they could recommence blooming. Once again Mother Nature changed directions providing us with some cold nights which resulted in the blooms freezing. Fortunately, I managed to get a couple of shots in before the cold hit.

Unbeknownst to me, there is another *R. praevernum* in the yard that due to its location and shelter from the cold winds is currently blooming. Always nice to have a backup at this time of the year when we are at the mercy of Mother Nature. Even with the steps backwards, the tete-a-tete daffodils are now blooming with the King Alfreds not far behind. The magnolias are budding up



with the first bloomers historically – Eric Saville and Royal Crown expected to bloom in the next few weeks. Quince and its neighbouring flowering current ‘King Edward’ are displaying both leaf and bud growth. The least exciting display of growth is the grass which means that it will soon be time to dust off the lawn mower.

Our return to seasonal weather and temperatures has allowed pruning activities to commence. Given the size of the yard, there is always something that requires pruning whether it be to reduce size (trees, bushes) or as part of the yearly ritual to allow for this year’s growth (hydrangea, roses, hardy fuchsias).

Pruning rhododendrons is OFF LIMITS for the work crew by order of the Head Gardener. Of course that doesn’t stop the youngest member of the crew. Anything that the mouth can reach is game for chewing be it inside the house or outside in the garden. She also displays no hesitation in running through the rhododendrons and flowers beds in her pursuit of the birds. She is after all a bird dog but there appears to be some confusion between being a ‘pointer’ or a go out and get them ‘retriever’. It all comes down to a liking of things that move, be it leaves, balls, or birds.

Soil prep in the vegetable patch is underway and seed catalogues are required reading this time of year. The Head Gardener makes the planting choices and every year there is usually something new to try along with all the standard plantings. I do insist on patty pan squash which is a favourite of mine when sliced, brushed lightly with olive oil and placed directly on the grill. Add cleaning the grill to my list of yard related activities!

We’ve had an influx of female Anna’s hummingbirds lately which means nesting season will commence soon if it hasn’t already. I’m on the lookout for the arrival of the 1st male Rufous which to me is a sign that spring has definitely arrived.

Plan on joining us for our AGM on the 16th and after the business is complete, enjoy the pictures from our member gardens. Next month should be a treat with Chris Southwick agreeing to present to us. The last two truss shows have been in the YAK so I’m hoping that in May we will be able to meet and have the show in person. Is anyone up for some garden touring this spring?

Suggestions? Offers?

Maureen Worden

The following articles originally appeared in the Fraser South Newsletter, March 2013 by Brenda Macdonald



Notes From the Chair

EPIMEDIUMS (EPIMEDIA?)

Already many of the earliest signs of spring are upon us, at least those of us who do not live halfway up a mountain. However, even in our garden we can see the earliest of the crocuses (those sort of washed-out mauve ones that only really look impressive if you have an entire swathe of them, and you stand far enough away) and some smallish patches of snowdrops that I keep hoping will turn into largish patches sooner rather than later. Rhododendrons 'Christmas Cheer' and its doppelgänger 'Rosamundi'

FROM THE PRESIDENT

are out in many gardens, as well as the species *mucronulatum*, *ririei*, and *moupinense*.

Another early riser is the genus *Epimedium*. Even at our shady altitude we noticed that one of our not-yet-planted specimens *E.* 'Black Sea' was showing its curled up flower stem on the surface of the soil. So if you have not been out to shear back last year's now-tatty leaves, it would be a good time to get to it.

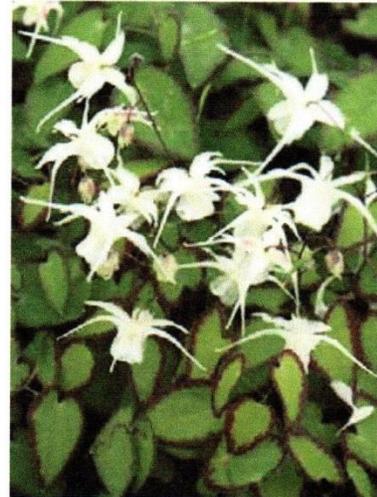
From a paleontological perspective epimediums are a temperate zone plant that was probably found all across the northern hemisphere. However several millennia of ice ages reduced its spread to areas of China that were not glaciated, and a few other pockets. Only its close cousin, the pristine and delicate *Vancouveria*, remains in North America, native to the west coast of Washington, Oregon, and California.

A few of the Chinese species were sent home as part of the enormous booty of the great Victorian hunter-gatherers, but the vast majority of the species only became available after the Cultural Revolution had spun itself out. Of the 44 recognized species of epimediums, 36 were discovered and documented after 1975.

The few specimens and seeds that did survive those earlier voyages home to Britain and other part of Europe were enthusiastically embraced by gardeners. The plants were bullet proof or ironclad or whatever descriptor is appropriate for a plant that can thrive under two of a gardener's obstacles - winter cold and summer shade - and even survive quite nicely under the third - lack of water during the growing season. Moreover, importantly for the modern North American garden, epimediums are deer resistant.

Epimediums have an amazing array of common names, some of which are hard to reconcile. Barrenwort and Anchor plant are easy to deal with, even Rowdy Lamb Herb, but how could those decorous Victorians have reconciled Bishop's Hat with Randy Beef Grass, or Fairy Wings with Horny Goat Weed?

The less salubrious names describe the effect of ingesting epimediums rather than their appearance, and are the result of this plant's long history as part of traditional Chinese medicine. Stories of shepherds noticing the increased frequency and enthusiasm of breeding activities in their herds after grazing in meadows filled with these plants led to a predictable use in humans as the original





Viagra. This has, of course, led to over-exploitation of wild populations, which can be considered only slightly less objectionable than killing rhinos for their horns or bears for their gall bladders.

Epimediums are herbaceous perennials; some are evergreen but most die back to the ground each winter. They can be divided into two broad groups: those that spread and those that clump. Various hybrids have now been developed that range in height from only a couple of inches to a good two feet. Their leaves are often attractively heart shaped with deep red or maroon edges. The leaves are often tinted bronze or copper when new, and many display very attractive fall colouring. The blossom colours range from maroon and red through orange to yellow and white. Held aloft on thin, wiry stems, the flowers seem to dance about in the slightest breeze.



A moist woodland with dappled shade is an epimedium's domicile of choice. It will sulk in bright sun and in heavy shade. Even then, epimediums are one of the few plants that can survive in the dry shade under conifers, if only as an attractive ground cover. They are care free, with the caveat that the deciduous types should have their last-year's leaves cut off at ground level in December or January, allowing the flower stems and new leaf growth to show to advantage.



Epimediums have a significantly unique flower shape - the cause of at least some of their common names. The flowers are not large but often each flower scape has many blossoms. Usually there are four petal-like inner sepals; the outer sepals are small and quickly shed as the flower opens. The actual petals are often developed into long spurs, giving the flowers a reflexed and delicate appearance. Conversely sometimes it is the greatly expanded sepals that provide the colour, the petals being much less conspicuous. Either way, the blossoms are most often heavily reflexed, and this, in combination with the tall and wiry flower stems, is what gives the plant its delicate and ethereal appearance.

(Pages 2 and 3 - Top to bottom: *E.* 'Black Sea'; *E.* 'Bandit'; *E.* (unknown yellow); 2 of *E.* 'Sweetheart'; *E. grandiflorum* 'Nanum'; 2 of *E.* 'Yokihi')

Brenda Macdonald

From the Garden



Bo-Peep



Hellebores



R. rirrei



R. praevernium flower



R. praevernium

Jim Barlup Hybrids

Picture credit : Jim Barlup



Pauline Linda (Violet Mist x Black Adder x Hollis Hope)



Peach Recital (Percy Wiseman x Summer Peach)



Pecos Dawn (Amber Touch x Rocky Point)



Peggie Roberts (Fancy x r.yakushmanum x Coronation Day)



Plum High (Fancy x r.yakushmanum x Frank Galsworthy)



Plum Magic (Plum High x Violettas Song)



Plum Passion (Plum High x Jonathan Shaw)



Plum Satin (Jonathan Shaw x Frosted Plum)



Plum Wild (Jonathan Shaw x Plum High)



Porcelain Promise (Peach Charm x Pirouette)



Powder Snow (r.yakushimanum x r.macabeaenum)



Purple Embers (Midnight Mystique x Jonathan Shaw)