



THE YAK

Volume 37, Number 2

February 2023



R. faucium

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

<http://frasersouthernrhodos.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:



R. faucium

Elepidote

Sub Genus: Hymenanthes

Section: Ponticum

Sub Section: Thomsonia

Height 1.5-6.5m, an erect shrub or small tree; bark smooth, peeling.

Leaves: 7-12 x 2.5-3.5cm, oblanceolate, apex rounded, retained for 2-3 years; upper surface glabrous, lower surface greenish with red punctate hair bases and a few scattered hairs towards the midrib; petiole 0.7-1.5cm long, often winged for part of its length,

Flower/Truss Description: 5-10 flowered, compact to open-topped. Corolla campanulate, 3.5-4.5cm long, pink to white tinged pink, spotted purple. Ovary densely glandular.

Bloom Time: Early to early midseason.

Distribution: S. Tibet, 2,600-3,350m (8,500-10,850ft.), forest margins, rock faces.

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

This Month

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.

Upcoming Meetings

Date: Wednesday, March 15 at 7:30 pm.

Title: Annual AGM and
Fragrance in the Garden, Nancy Moore

The best gardens aren't just a feast for our eyes; they are a treat for our other senses as well. Incorporating plants with fragrant flowers or foliage into our gardens creates another dimension and expands the way we enjoy our gardens.

This presentation will give you ideas for plants to add to your garden to provide fragrance (and beauty) throughout the year.

2022 ELECTED OFFICERS

President: Gerry Nemanishen 604-826-0166
Past Pres: Colleen Bojczuk 604-826-4221
Vice Pres: Jim Worden 604-541-4754
Secretary: Barbara Mathias 778-580-6404
Treasurer: Vacant
Directors: Robert Talbot 604-720-0134
Colleen Bojczuk 604-826-4221
Vacant

VOLUNTEERS

Programs: Vacant
Membership: Vacant
Newsletter: Maureen Worden 604-541-4754
Librarian: Gerald Nemanishen 604-826-0166
Website: Maureen Worden 604-541-4754
Hospitality: Vacant
BCCGC Liaison: Vacant

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

Vacancies - Please consider contributing to the group by volunteering for one of the vacant executive or still very important volunteer positions. Contact a member of the executive for further information.

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

From the President

The cold snap produced some interesting features on our fountain wall near our patio. I share this photo with you.



Spring is just around the corner. Witch hazels are blooming. My earliest snow drops are starting to pop up, some with blooms. I am starting my clean-up efforts, a little each day when I take the dog, Razzi, out for her morning run and fetch.

We plan on holding our annual general meeting in March and need as many to attend so that we have a quorum. We are still looking for volunteers to join the board. You may be contacted by the nominating committee as we need for confirm our board at the meeting.

For those of you, who are members of ARS, contact me or Maureen if you are unaware of your membership number. You can go to the web site (<https://www.arsoffice.org/index.htm>) and get a log on to view the latest issue of the Journal. A quote from this month's journal:

"Man – despite his artistic pretensions, his sophistication, and his many accomplishments – owes his existence to a six-inch layer of topsoil and the fact that it rains."

Anonymous

Respectfully, *Gerald Nemanishen*

From the Editor

It's already February, the shortest month of the year. I've always liked February. January which always seems to go on forever is over, the days are finally getting noticeably longer, and spring including daylight savings time is around the corner. Rapidly approaching this year is the retirement (from his day job) of the head gardener that while being a big change for him will be an even BIGGER change for me. Perhaps I need to start on a "Honey Do List"! After the last blast of winter, I'm looking forward to the milder weather as we move forward into 2023 which I hope also means the end of the power outages we've had over the last couple of months including two days in a row. We (or I should say the "bug girl") are still finding the occasional BMSB in the house. Is anyone else still seeing these stink bugs?

A stroll through the garden is showing signs of growth everywhere: the snow drops are up, some even blooming, the daffodils have pushed through and showing a couple inches of green along with the daylilies. Even the chives at the back of the house are growing. Magnolias and rhododendrons are budding up and "In the Garden" will reveal the first blooms of the year. We were fortunate at Ginny Fearing's invitation to acquire some of Harold's plants from his greenhouses. These are currently outside in their pots hardening up for spring planting. All seem fine after the last cold snap.



While we've occasionally seen them in the backyard, we've now acquired a regular flock of bushtits. They come multiple times a day to enjoy the "red hot" suet in a feeder I put out during the December cold snap. (see "Spotted around the Neighbourhood" in the September 2018 YAK for more information on Bushtits). Joining them at this feeder is an increasing number of chickadees, juncos and downy woodpeckers.



This morning I noticed that the "nocturnal swim team" has recommenced their "washing / food prep" sessions. It won't be long before we're once again joined by Mr. and Mrs. Mallard lounging pool side. We have "Winter Delights" to share with you this month, thanks Colleen and we're getting near the end of Jim Barlup's Hybrid rhododendron series.

This month's presentation is on Whidbey Islands Meerkerk Rhododendron Garden. A number of years ago the Head Gardener and I went to an ARS conference in Everett, Washington. One of the garden tours included Meerkerk Gardens. It was a wonderful garden at that time and I imagine it's even better now. I remember I bought a Starlight Champagne (Yaku Sunrise x Hansel) and Seaview Sunset (Nancy Evans x Canadian Sunset) from the Meerkerk nursery. At the time they were relatively new hybrids from hybridizer Frank Fujioka whose garden on Whidbey Island we also visited during that trip.

We hope to see everyone at the meeting, it should be a great one!

Maureen Worden

WINTER DELIGHTS

Here are just a few great plants that should cheer you up even on the dullest days. The pussywillows are surely the best sign of spring approaching



The common silvery type (*Salix discolor*) seen in ditches and wild areas.

The Japanese Black (*S. gracilistylus* *Melanostachys*)

– so dramatic when the red anthers emerge, and the new stunningly beautiful.



Japanese Pink (*S. g. Mt. Aso*)

- gorgeous when partly open with a bright white tip. I bought one and planted with pink and white double primulas below – love it!

The Hellebores, seemingly so traditional at this time of year, have exploded in hybrid groups too numerous to list. My favorites are the 'Frostkiss' series and the 'Ice and Roses' series. Not only are the blooms spectacular, but the foliage also – often with pink veining or a dusky purple flush.



Frostkiss Anna's Red



Frostkiss Dana's Dulcet



Ice and Roses Dark Picotee



Look for these and many others, and I dare you to choose just one favorite!

Happy Plant Hunting,
Colleen B

Ice and Roses Nightingale (left)

Ice and Rose White (right)



The following article originally appeared in the Fraser South Newsletter, March 2015 by Sean Rafferty

Rhododendron mucronulatum

(Epithet: with a small point)

R. mucronulatum was first introduced to the **Arnold Arboretum** in 1882 by **Doctor Emil Bretschneider** and reintroduced by **Kew Gardens** in 1907.

This species is found in southeast Siberia, Hubei and Shangdong in eastern China, Mongolia, Korea and Japan, growing from 1,00 - 5,500 feet in open and exposed areas or thin woodlands. In cultivation it does best in full sunshine. *R. mucronulatum* is completely deciduous, and may grow to eight feet with a somewhat sprawling habit. A variety called 'Chejuense' is a smaller,

| Species and their Hybrids | | pollen ♂ | |
|---------------------------|---|----------|----|
| | | B | b |
| pistil ♀ | B | BB | Bb |
| | b | Bb | bb |



R. mucronulatum



compact form and grows two to three feet tall. The flowers are pink to rose-purple, 1¾ inches in diameter and appear at the terminal ends of the twiggy branchlets, often as many as six in a cluster. Occasionally, it produces axillary flowers. The bright green leaves are 1½-3 inches long and ½-3 inches wide, elliptic-lanceolate to lanceolate, scaly on both surfaces with a mucronate tip.

R. mucronulatum blooms very early in the season and in milder gardens is known to bloom in December, while in colder gardens it may be as late as April. It is extremely hardy to -30°C, making it a worthwhile plant for the

harsh climates on the east coast of the continent. Almost any soil or planting site is fine, and it does best in full sun. If planted in too much shade, growth will be thin and flower production will be weak. It also responds well to being pruned.

R. mucronulatum is closely related to *R. dauricum* but differs in that *R. dauricum* has evergreen or semi-evergreen foliage which is thicker and more rounded with short sharp tips, branchlets that are short and twiggy, and a corolla that is smaller. There are also differences in the scales.

R. mucronulatum is a cheerful plant and a joy to behold as it blooms so very early when there is little else to hearken the coming of springtime. There have been some successes in hybridising with *R. mucronulatum* which are displayed on the following pages.

Sean Rafferty



R. mucronulatum var. *mucronulatum* x *R. dauricum*
K. Verboom, 1990



R. racemosum x *R. mucronulatum* var. *mucronulatum*
J. Gable, 1934



R. yedoense var. *poukhanense* x *R. mucronulatum* var. *mucronulatum*
A. Shamarello, 1957



R. leucaspis x *R. mucronulatum* var. *mucronulatum*
B. Mulligan, 1947

From The Garden



Witch Hazel



r. praevevnum

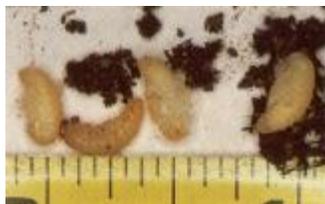
Garden Pest

Root Weevil – Several different species of weevil are responsible for rhododendron plant damage and are a common problem. To understand their control it is necessary to understand their life cycle.



Adults – In the adult state they are small black beetles about 6 to 10 mm (1/4" to 3/8") long, depending on the particular species. They are very mobile and can move great distances, though at times they will stay in

one area and feed. Their cycle begins in late spring when they emerge as adults from the ground where they have overwintered as adults or matured from larvae. Since they are nocturnal, they feed at night, and being cold blooded they do not feed until the night temperatures are sufficiently warm. After emerging they feed for two weeks to a month before beginning to lay eggs. At this time they almost become egg laying machines as they wander through your garden, and your neighbors' gardens, laying eggs in the leaves and mulch under the plants. All adults are female and parthogenetic meaning that a male is not necessary for reproduction. The adults eat small notches in the edges of the leaves which may disfigure the plant, but will not kill it. They are a problem to control, since most control methods aim at putting a stomach poison on the leaves which the adults must eat. But before they eat they may lay eggs under the plant (or another plant that they didn't eat on), which eventually hatch and continue the life cycle of the insect.



Larvae – The eggs that were laid under the plant hatch and become white larvae up to 6 mm (1/4") long. This stage is where the most damage is done to the plant, and it is impossible to see that damage is happening until it is too late. The larvae eat the roots and often girdle the stem, eating the bark and essential cambium layer on the stem of the plant just at or below ground level, making it impossible for the plant to feed its top.

These larvae eventually become pupae, which are soft and white and look much like the adult. Before long these pupae become adults and the cycle is started again. Two or three generations a year are possible.

Control – For the home gardener the most often used control is Orthene which should be sprayed on the foliage at about three week intervals from about May to October, depending on the weather. This is done to control the adults but is not fully effective because the weevil may lay eggs under the plant before they eat the foliage that has been sprayed. Better control was possible with long lived chemicals which could be placed in the soil under the plant, preventing the eggs from hatching, but these chemicals are no longer available for environmental reasons.

There is a biological control in the form of a nematode which can be applied in the fall to control the larvae. While this approach is promising, it has limitations in that the beneficial nematodes are very sensitive to temperature and moisture extremes and will not live over winter. If applied to soil that is too cold, too wet, too dry or too hot, they will die and provide no control. Best control is achieved by using both chemical and nematode methods with proper timing.



Source: Greer's Guidebook to Available Rhododendrons

Jim Barlup Hybrids

Picture credit : Jim Barlup



Wendys Way (Lemon Embers x Cream Glory x Viennese Waltz)



White Cinnamon (r.yakushimanum x Mrs. JG (Millias))



White Fire (Mrs. Furnivall x Coronation Day x White Cinnamon)



White Ginger (Phyllis Korn x Trude Webster)



White Opal (Peach Charm x Pirouette)



Wild Berry (Violet Mist x Plum Passion)



Wild Ginger (Apricot Fantasy x Hills Low Red)



Wild Plum (Purple Amethyst x Plum Passion x Hollis Hope)



Wind Dancer (Cimarron Sun x Capistrano)



Winding Road (Lois Blackmore x Plum Passion)



Wind River (Mindys Love x Whopper x Lems Cameo x Whopper x BrandtsTropicanna)



Wind Song (Nancy Evans x Bergs Yellow)