



THE YAK

Volume 37, Number 7

September 2023



R. decorum

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:



R. decorum

Elepidote rhododendron

Sub Genus: Hymenanthes

Section: Ponticum

Sub Section: Fortunea

Height: to 9m, a fairly erect and sometimes straggly shrub or small tree. Branchlets with a temporary glaucous bloom.

Leaves: 7-30 x 2.2-11 cm, oblanceolate to elliptic, apex and base rounded, retained 1-2 years; upper and lower surfaces glabrous.

Inflorescence: 7-14 flowered, usually open-topped.

Corolla: 6-8 lobes, openly funnel-campanulate, to 10cm long, fragrant, white, pale rose or pale lavender rose, with yellow, green or crimson tinge at base, with or without markings; calyx 1-3mm, stipitate-glandular; stamens 12-20, puberulous at base; ovary and style stipitate-glandular,

Fragrant: Yes Bloom Time: Midseason

Geographical Origin: N Burma, China (Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou)

Sources:

The Encyclopedia of Rhododendron Species, Peter A. Cox & Kenneth N.E. Cox
ARS: www.rhododendron.org

This Month

Date: Wednesday, September 20th at 7:30 pm.

Place: In person at Langley Mennonite Fellowship Church

Title: "The Hardier, Smaller Rhododendrons" by Glen Jamieson

This talk is thus focused on the taxonomic and cultural characteristics of some of the hardier, smaller, mostly non-deciduous rhododendron species that should survive in many Canadian microclimates. I am not including hybrids, as there are too many and I am not familiar with what those best for any area might be.

Glen will also briefly speak on:

- The ARS FALL WESTERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE in Florence, Oregon.
- "The Five Best Traits and Activities" I've seen in VI clubs.



Bio:

Dr. Glen Jamieson has a [B.Sc](#) in Agriculture from McGill University and a M.Sc. and Ph.D. in Zoology from UBC. He worked for Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) as a research scientist for 31 years, both in the Maritimes (5 yr) and at the Pacific Biological Station in Nanaimo, BC (26 yr).

He retired from DFO in 2008, and became editor of the *Journal of the American Rhododendron Society* in 2009. He joined the ARS in 1995, and has explored for plants in Yunnan, China (2005); Borneo (2008); Ecuador and Peru (seven trips between 1998-2014) and in Sikkim, India (2015). He has travelled to over 70 countries and with his wife Dorothy, lives and maintains a garden in Parksville that is periodically on his local chapter's (Mount Arrowsmith; MARS) garden tour, where he also has an extensive vireya collection, possibly the largest in Canada. He is the District 1 Director, the editor of the *Journal American Rhododendron Society* and created the online journal *Rhododendrons International*.

2023 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(s):	Gerry Nemansihen	604-826-0166
	Colleen Bojczuk	604-826-4221
Directors:	Robert Talbot	604-720-0134
	Colleen Bojczuk	604-826-4221
	Cheryl Harvey	604-556-2441
	Aird Flavelle	604-870-4221

VOLUNTEERS

Programs:	Aird Flavelle	604-870-4221
Membership:	Vacant	
Newsletter:	Maureen Worden	604-541-4754
Librarian:	Gerald Nemanishen	604-826-0166
Website:	Maureen Worden	604-541-4754
Hospitality:	Vacant	

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

Vacancies - Please consider contributing to the group by volunteering for the executive or 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.

Next Meeting

Date: Wednesday, October 18th at 7:30 pm.

Place: In person at Langley Mennonite Fellowship Church

Speaker: TBA

From the President



Welcome back to a new year of meetings and presentations. Hopefully your garden has survived the summer's drought.

We kick off with our September meeting on the 20th.. Glen Jamieson will be presenting. Aird Flavelle will describe the talk in his report.

We normally start membership renewals in September, but our executive has not discussed membership fees for the year. We will have the renewal form for the October Yak.

Respectfully submitted,

Gerald Nemanishen, President

Club Activity Reports

May Truss Show

Despite the hot weather spell, there were still some beautiful samples of blooms to see. The change in procedure went well, with each member showing and talking about their individual entries instead of the usual voting.

It seemed so much more personal to hear a brief discussion of each truss, plus comments or questions from others. Even with such a small turnout there was a generous raffle table with some real treasures to be had. Thanks to all who participated.

Respectfully, Colleen B



June Picnic

What a wonderful afternoon we spent at the Flavell's home. The weather was perfect, the food was delicious, and the silent auction offerings were unique and very well received by all.

Sheila and Aird had gone out of their way to create a welcoming space, with tables and chairs arranged in sunny and shady places, and beautiful planters all around. After the meal Aird led us on a tour of their multi-acre property of natural forest and mature landscape, including many Rhodos from the McKee collection. A small crowd of about 20 guests, but all enthusiastic and companionable, and we regretted having to leave the serenity of the garden.

Thanks again to Sheila and Aird for their hospitality.

Respectfully, Colleen B



From the Editor

Welcome back to the 2023 fall season of the Fraser Valley Rhododendron Society, I hope everyone managed to navigate the varied weather this summer and that your gardens are alive and well despite the lack of rainfall.

My perennial beds admittedly are looking tired as the focus for watering was not on them but rather on the rhododendrons. It's great to have a wooded section of the yard for rhodos that prefer and thrive in that environment. Unfortunately they have to compete with the trees for water drying out much quicker than the rhodos that are in beds with only a couple of trees.

With no re-bloom rhodos to feature this month (and you've seen the pictures of our gardens fall crocuses and cyclamens before), "In The Garden" features wildlife (no, not the bunnies) and a 2nd year perennial that has had an outstanding year with very little moisture. I will be on the hunt for more drought resistant perennials. If you have any pictures of a perennial, annual or whatever that did well this year or it just happens to be your favourite, please share your picture(s) for the "in The Garden" feature. Include the name (if you know it) and a few words about why it's your favourite, growing location, moisture needs etc. I'm sure I'm not the only one looking for some new plant ideas.

The vegetable garden of course was hand watered regularly and production was high this year. Some plants have had their day but the tomatoes are still producing in this weather so they are being consumed daily. The abundance of cherry tomatoes is providing a regular meal of "Burst Cherry Tomato Pasta Sauce" which is the Head Gardeners specialty. So fresh picked right from the garden AND a nice break from meat. This was also a "PEARmageddon" year with an abundant crop to bake with and give away.

Wandering around the garden highlights that there will be a lot of pruning required this fall, not only from an aesthetic perspective but to avoid a repeat on some of the breakage we had last winter during the ice storm if we have such a storm this upcoming winter.

WASPS! With the emergence of the wasps in late July, I have avoided most gardening activities (wasps and I have a habit of running into each other and I suffer greatly from the encounters). The Head Gardener along with the youngest member of the garden crew continued to garden. I chose to stay inside (with the retired garden helper) and reclaim my dining room. The office has become my "Loom Room" after hours of digging out and shredding years of my professional life – FYI, only 1 shredder was killed in the process. The office was downsized and moved next store into what was once a sewing/craft room. This also involved hours of effort to discard bygone hobbies and only keep what might continue in the future. Much like cleaning up a garden after a winter storm, the efforts gave me a lot of satisfaction upon completion. The Head Gardener was kind enough to provide all furniture moving service.

Back to WASPS. I can't remember seeing this many in past years. I cleaned out the trap (rough count indicated at least 60+ deceased) this morning putting new "bait" out and within a couple of hours there was already 15 wasps "swimming". A "Garden Friend or Pest" (?), these used the casting holes in my patio chairs for their nests. Have you seen them? Regardless, next year, I'm plugging the holes!

This month we have Glen Jamieson, the District 1 Director and editor of the ARS journal presenting. (Those of you with full memberships receive this journal). Over the last couple of years you'll remember Glen from a couple of Zoom presentations he did for us. These were well received so having Glen present in person will be a treat. Without the plant sale we rely on auctions / raffles to bring in money. The picnic silent auction was a boost to the bottom line so plan on coming to the meeting and REMEMBER to bring something for the raffle table next week.

Maureen Worden



The following article originally appeared in the Fraser South Newsletter, September 2011 by Brenda Macdonald

R. thomsonii

R. thomsonii ssp. *thomsonii* is perhaps the iconic representation of the large Thomsonia subsection. Rarely confused with other species it is usually easy to identify, particularly in a garden setting, with its combination of waxy, deep red flowers with prominent almost black-red nectaries, rounded leaves, smooth, peeling, multicoloured bark and those remarkable calyces. Often of contrasting whitish or yellow-green, each large cup-shaped calyx securely clasps the base of the flower, often remaining long after the blossom has dropped off. The effect is somewhat jaunty, somewhat like the a hotel bellboy's cap, and, combined with the fat round leaves and clown-like red of the flowers, gives the plant a cheerful rather than elegant look.

Generally considered hardy, *thomsonii*'s early bloom time does make it susceptible to late frosts, and it prefers the shelter of the woodland away from the wind. In the wild it can be extremely variable in habit and size, as well as in calyx colour, which can range from yellow-green through crimson to purple.

First introduced by J. D. Hooker from Sikkim in 1849-1850, subsequent populations were discovered in Nepal, Bhutan, Assam, and southern Tibet, and by 1857 it was already part of a cross-breeding program that verged on a cottage industry. Reviewing Salley and Greer's *Rhododendron Hybrids* I gave up counting when I had reached over 100 hybrids and was only in the middle of the C's.

Not only that, but there seems to have been

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



Engraving by Fitch, 1857
Curtis's Botanical Magazine

a particular creativity in evidence as the hybridizers searched for names for these progeny. Either that, or the sheer number of crosses made people look deep in their creative psyches for a name that was not already taken. But how can you resist such names as 'Blazing Petals', 'Banned in Boston', 'Black Prince', or my personal favourite, 'Aroma from Tacoma', a Loderi cross from Hjalmer Larson.

A couple of the original crosses became legends in their own right: Gill, Richards & Sons developed 'Aurora', which was a parent of the Rothschild's ubiquitous 'Naomi' series, and it seems as if there were hardly a rhododendron developed in the 1950's and early 1960's that didn't have a piece of 'Naomi' in it somewhere.

Although somewhat slow to mature (it doesn't bud up in a two-gallon pot) *thomsonii* is reliably floriferous once it does get started, and is a wonderful addition to any garden.

Brenda Macdonald



top left *R. 'Aurora'* - a *griffithianum*, *fortunei*, and *thomsonii* cross by Rothschild in 1922, it was itself a parent to the prolific 'Naomi' group.



top right *R. 'Oporto'* - the almost edible 'Oporto' is a straight *thomsonii ssp. thomsonii* x *sanguineum ssp. sanguineum var haemaleum* cross by Nelson in 1965.



middle right *R. 'Cornish Cross'* - essentially a grex of varying degrees of attractiveness from a *thomsonii* x *griffithianum* cross done by Rothschild in 1935, they all at least retained *thomsonii's* wonderful peeling bark.

bottom right
R. 'Royston Red' - this small gem is a *forrestii* Repens Group x *thomsonii* cross developed by Harry White and named by Alleyne Cook in honour of the local hybridizers Ted and Mary Grieg and their nursery in Royston, BC.



All photos harvested from the wonderful "Hirsutum" site
www.hirsutum.info/index.html

Garden Friend - Grass Carrying Wasps



Grass carrying wasps get their name from the fact that they are often spotted flying around with blades of grass. More specifically speaking, it's the females that display this unusual behavior, using tall grass to build their nests in a pre-existing cavity.

They are a species of thread-waisted wasps (Sphecid wasps), growing up to a length of 0.75 inches with a shiny black body. The grass carrying wasps are a solitary insect species, which means they build small nests and live by themselves rather than living in a colony. Like other solitary wasps, these wasps aren't aggressive and don't defend their nests. These gentle, solitary wasps are common in July and August, visiting a variety of flowering native plants.

The grass-carrying wasp has a life cycle much like that of the mason bee. During the summer it feeds on nectar and possibly small insects. Nest initiation begins in mid-July. Once the wasps have found a suitable site in a cavity, they begin dragging grass into it to make a nest. Female grass-carrying wasps typically use the pieces of grass to line their nests and make divisions inside the cavity for the developing larvae.

Using her mandibles, the female wasp cuts a grass blade, and then flies back to her nest carrying it in her mandibles. These wasps are often spotted by gardeners as they fly toward their nest carrying grass blades. They coil the blades to form partitions or plug the end of the cavity. The grass is formed into individual cells, which are then provisioned with prey.

Like most wasps, adult grass carrying wasps primarily feed on nectar and pollen. The females also prey on insects, However, they do not feed on these insects themselves. They paralyze the prey and drag them into the nest, to serve as food for the newborn grass carrying wasp larvae when the eggs hatch.

Besides hunting prey, adults also visit a variety of flowering plants for nectar and can be considered pollinators in some cases. Like other solitary thread-waisted wasps, these wasps often demonstrate a preference for plants with white flowers. Nectar from flowering plants provides energy for the adults, especially females establishing nests and hunting for prey.

The larvae hatch in the following days and consume the cached prey for the next four to seven days. When the food provisions are entirely consumed, each larva spins a cocoon and overwinters in the cocoon in a prepupal or pupal state. Development continues the following spring with the wasps completing pupation, emerging as adults in July.

Credit:Houzz.com
Whatsthatbug.com

From The Garden

On a Sunday morning in mid-July, crows converged in the wooded area of our backyard. It took awhile to discover what their issue was. We are used to seeing/hearing Barred Owls that reside nearby but this was the first Great Horned Owl. The noise lasted all day as the owl periodically moved from one tree to another and the crows kept up their racket. (of course this did not phase the owl). The owl is still in the area (hopefully keeping the wild bunnies in check). Judging by the screeches heard at night it is likely a juvenile or a female (according to *Birds of the Pacific Northwest*).



Great Horned Owl



Helianthus Perennial Sunflower

This has proven to be the best performer during our summer drought. Only its second year in the garden and with only the moisture that Mother Nature has provided, it is over six feet tall and is providing continuous blooms regardless of temperature or lack of moisture. Constantly covered with bees, it's providing a burst of colour in a tired looking perennial bed where only the sedum and hardy fuchsias are still in bloom.



Lantana

My go to annual to fill an empty patio pot that provides patio colour from spring until the first hard frost. Also a slight wilt from this plant is my "canary" that the rest of the pots/baskets are due for a drink.

Editor's Note:

Chris Ballyn was an early and a long-time member of Fraser South for 30+ years. The 1991 September YAK indicates that Chris at that time was both a club director as well as the membership chair.

Even though he didn't attend meetings for many years, he remained a member through to the end of the 2022 season and looked forward to receiving his monthly printed copy of the YAK.



BALLYN, William Christopher

1932 - 2023

It is with deep and profound sadness that we announce the passing of our dear friend, Christopher Ballyn at Langley Memorial Hospital on May 9, 2023. Born and raised in Toronto, Christopher grew up amongst a close-knit family. Christopher attended the University of Toronto's prestigious School of Architecture where he earned an Architectural degree and in 1960 became a Member of the Royal Architectural Institute Of Canada. Early in his career, he joined the prominent Toronto based architecture firm Webb, Zerafa, Menkes and Housdon Architects (WZMH) and eventually headed up the firm's offices in Calgary and Vancouver. It was Christopher's design that won an architectural competition for Calgary's Municipal Building, built in the mid nineteen eighties.

Christopher owned homes in Calgary and North Vancouver for a number of years, and after retirement, purchased a property in South Langley. He spent many happy years renovating and recreating his large home and enjoying his beautiful property, especially his rhododendrons in the expansive gardens.

Christopher will be fondly remembered for his sociable, magnetic, warm and charming personality, his avid interest in the Langley chapter of the Rhododendron Society, as well as his many and varied wide ranging interests and his fondness for Classical music.

Although Christopher was quite private and secluded in his later years, he could occasionally be seen dashing around Langley in his black modified Cadillac which he affectionately called the "Queen Mary". Christopher firmly believed that life was an adventure that was to be lived to the fullest. His life was a testament to this belief.

Predeceased by his Mother Anne Thelma Eileen Ballyn, Father William Clifford Ballyn and younger brother Paul Dewi Ballyn, Christopher leaves behind and is greatly missed by his many friends in Greater Vancouver, Vancouver Island, Toronto and Florida. A kind note about Christopher's friends and neighbours who made such a valiant effort to be of great assistance to Christopher latterly, while he was still living in his country home. Their outstanding kindness and thoughtfulness over several years, was deeply valued by Christopher and by those of us who were further away and appreciated their being there for him, when we couldn't be.

Christopher was a very kind and caring person who believed in giving back to the community. Over the years he had generously donated money to different charities and organizations and supported the Arts in Canada. At Christopher's request, no ceremony was held. If you would like to do something in remembrance of Christopher, please make a donation to a charity of your choice. He was especially fond of wildlife and nature.

Rhododendrons of the Year Plant Awards

NW USA / Canada Region (2010)



Elepidote Rhododendron: 'Seaview Sunset'

Flower inside light yellow edged with broad band of red-orange, outside deep yellowish pink, openly campanulate, wavy edges, 2" across. Dome-shaped trusses hold 16 flowers. Blooms early. Leaves elliptic, flat, down curved edges, broadly acute apex, cuneate base, 4" long, semi-glossy, dark green, retained 3-4 years. Grows to a typical height of 3 ft. in 10 years. Hardiness under evaluation, perhaps 0°F (-18°C). Hybridized by Fujioka.



Lepidote Rhododendron: 'Too Bee'

Flower pink with lighter throat and strong red spots, reverse darker pink, openly funnel-shaped, wavy to frilly lobes, 1½" across. Held in clusters of 3-5 lax flowers. Blooms early midseason. Leaves elliptic, acute apex, cuneate base, 1⅞" long, convex, dull, retained 2 years. Grows twice as broad as high, rounded and well-branched habit. Grows to a height of 1 ft. in 10 yrs. Plant and bud hardy to -10° F (-23° C). Hybridized by Berg.



Evergreen Azalea: 'Rosebud'

Flower strong purplish-pink, flushed with slight veining of deep purplish pink, broadly funnel-shaped, double, hose-in-hose, 1⅞" across. Blooms midseason. Leaves elliptic, 1" to 1½" long, glossy, mid green. Spreading, dense habit. Grows to a typical height of 4 ft in 10 years. Cold hardy to -10°F (-23°C). Hybridized by Gable. Received the ARS Award of Merit and the First Class Certificate from the Royal Horticultural Society.



Deciduous Azalea: 'Gibraltar'

Flower vivid orange, flushed red orange, deep crimson in bud, tubular funnel-shaped, frilly edges, 2¾" to 3" across. Ball-shaped trusses hold 10-12 flowers. Blooms midseason. Leaves elliptic, acute apex, cuneate base, deep green, deciduous. Mildew resistant. Upright growth habit. Grows to a height of 5 ft. in 10 years. Cold hardy to -15°F (-26° C). Hybridized by Edmund de Rothschild.

Photos (top to bottom) by Frank Fujioka, Don Kohlenberger, Sally and John Perkins, Harold Greer.



Elepidote Rhododendron: 'Lem's Cameo'

Flower strong purplish-pink at edges shading to light yellowish-pink at throat, with a strong red blotch on dorsal lobe, reverse shaded red, widely funnel-campanulate shaped, wavy lobes, 3½" across. Held in dome-shaped truss with 17-20 flowers. Blooms midseason. Leaves elliptic, apiculate apex, cuneate base, approximately 5" long, dark green, retained 3 years. New growth is mahogany colored. Upright plant habit. Grows to a typical height of 5 ft. in 10 years. Plant and bud hardy to 0°F (-18°C). Hybridized by Lem.



Lepidote Rhododendron: 'Bob's Blue'

Flower funnel-shaped, about ¾" across, light violet. Held in truss of 3-5 flowers. Blooms early midseason. Leaves small, leathery, dark bronze green in summer, turning to maroon in winter. Upright, well-branched plant habit. Grows to a typical height of 3 ft. in 10 years. Cold hardy to 0°F (-18°C). Hybridized by Rhodes.



Evergreen Azalea: 'Girard's Fuchsia'

Flower moderate to deep purplish-red with moderate purplish-red spots, reverse deep purplish-pink, broadly funnel-shaped, wavy lobes, 2½" to 3" across. Inflorescence 3 flowered. Blooms midseason. Leaves narrowly obovate to elliptic, apiculate apex, narrowly cuneate base, 1¾" long, glossy, moderate yellowish olive green. Broad plant habit. Grows to a typical height of 4 ft in 10 years. Cold hardy to -15°F (-26°C). Hybridized by Girard.



Deciduous Azalea: *R. luteum*

Flower bright yellow with darker yellow blotch, tubular funnel shaped, 1¾" to 2" across, fragrant. Truss holds 7 to 17 flowers. Blooms midseason to late midseason. Leaves oblong to oblong-oblongate, up to 5½" long, deciduous. Grows to a height of about 4 ft. in 10 years. Hardy to -10°F (-23°C). Species native to Eastern Europe, Turkey and Caucasus.

Photos (top to bottom) by Kenneth Cox, Garth Wedemire, Joe Coleman, Tadeusz Dauksza.