



Book Reviews (Margaret Hodgson)

***A Garden for Life: Mary Greig & the Royston Rhododendrons*** by Judith Walker, MBCSLA, RPP. Edited by Clive L. Justice, PhD (SFU) FCSLA Gold Medal ARS. 164 pages, 103 photographs and documents, nineteen chapters, plus Editor's Preface, Acknowledgements and Index. Softcover. Copyright 2015 by Judith Walker, and BC Bigleaf Maple Books, Vancouver, BC. ISBN 978-0-9920461-3-2 \$30.00 CDN

**Judith Walker**, MBCSLA, RPP, as noted on the inside front cover, was born in Vancouver, BC, and educated at the University of British Columbia and the University of Washington. She works as a landscape architect and planner in both private and public practice. Through her gardening experiences, she met Mary Greig, the main focus of this book and has skillfully captured the story of Marg Greig and her husband, Ted. With the assistance of many people, she has compiled an enjoyable story of their life together, their experiences of moving to Canada, their venturing into the nursery business (Royston Nursery), their family, their wide circle of friends, and Mary's dedicated

labour involved in the successful propagation of the Royston Rhododendrons.

The editor, Dr. Clive Justice, mentioned at the beginning of the book that the Rhododendron Species Foundation had published excerpts from the manuscript, starting in 2015 under the title of **Mary Greig and the Royston Rhododendrons** by Judith Walker, p. 123 of Rhododendron Species, Vol 10, 2015. The Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Newsletter of April, 2006, also included a very interesting article titled **Dracula and Rhododendrons** in which Alan Campbell described the Greek and Roman Legends related to "luteum honey-induced stupor" which afflicted both armies. The article continues to relate some local "urban legends" of people in the area which were directly connected to the author of Dracula. More facts are supplied about well-known rhodoholics – the Stokers, the Buchan Simpsons, and finishes the article with a short paragraph about Ted and Mary Greig.

The book includes nineteen chapters in which the author describes the first meeting with Mary Greig and how she began working with Mary in her gardening tasks. The writing style is relaxed and the author had added much interest by including direct quotes from Mary Greig which are all in bold type. An entire lifetime is described chronologically with Mary, her mother and siblings arriving from England in 1911. Her father had arrived in Canada some months ahead of the family. The story continues – Ted's arrival in 1919, meeting the Simpsons, starting the Royston Nursery, the years of work there, Ted's failing health and the closing of the nursery and the connection with Alleyne Cook to start the transfer of the rhododendrons to Vancouver. The very useful Index is arranged in two major sections by **People** and **Plants**, the latter of which includes all the names of various plants mentioned in the book, but even more to the heart of the matter, a very good list of all the rhododendrons mentioned in this very readable book. This is a new book in our library, as of September, 2015.