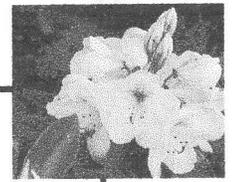


NORTH ISLAND RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

P. O. Box 3183 Courtenay, B.C., Canada V9N 5N4

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6 Oct

Executive meeting will be held at the home of Ernie Exner, 2160 Stadacona Dr., Comox.

13 Oct.

Guest speaker will be Gary Greene, one of the first members of the club, and a person who loves trees. He will talk about fall colour in the garden and park.

8 Sept.

Ev Jefferson gave a lively talk, and showed many interesting slides of his former garden, Golden Gardens, "the farm" he called it. Planning and arranging borders full of rhodos, ingenious use of discarded produce cases for propagation, the pond, complete with ducks and their families, all made an entertaining and educational evening. Luckily Ev brought his wife Pat, along, for she reminded him of rhodo names and other bits of garden information, when necessary.

Ev said this was the first time he "gave a speech". That's hard to believe, for he is a very relaxed and interesting speaker. In order to have him come back, we will probably be on the end of a long list!

10 Nov.

The speaker will be Aleyne Cook, who was involved with moving, planting and caring for the Greig rhodos in Stanley Park. I have an article written by his wife, Barbara, describing a walk through the area where these rhodos, and many magnolias have been planted. After growing on for over 30 years, they are a wonderful sight in spring.

MEMBER NOTES

First, remember member dues for 1999. The price will be held at \$35 for the coming year. You can mail your cheque in the envelope provided, or bring it to the meeting in Oct. or Nov.

PROVEN PERFORMERS

For people with shallow wells or little shade for their rhodos, this summer has been an acid test. Amazingly, some plants are stress-free even with the absolute minimum of water. Add drought-resistance to your

list of good attributes! Start making little lists as you walk around the garden this fall. Some rhodos take about 5 years to settle down, and others may not bloom for 10 years, so do not be too impatient. List the plants that consistently do well for you, and note their height after a few years, flower resistance to frost and rain, any other items that make them proven performers in your garden.

ARE YOU AN EXPERT

How about sharing your expertise with other club members, in a ten-minute talk describing your favorite rhodo, lily, or vegetable. Bring a recipe for how to fertilize - mulch - cook - whatever. Just speak to Harry to get on the list.

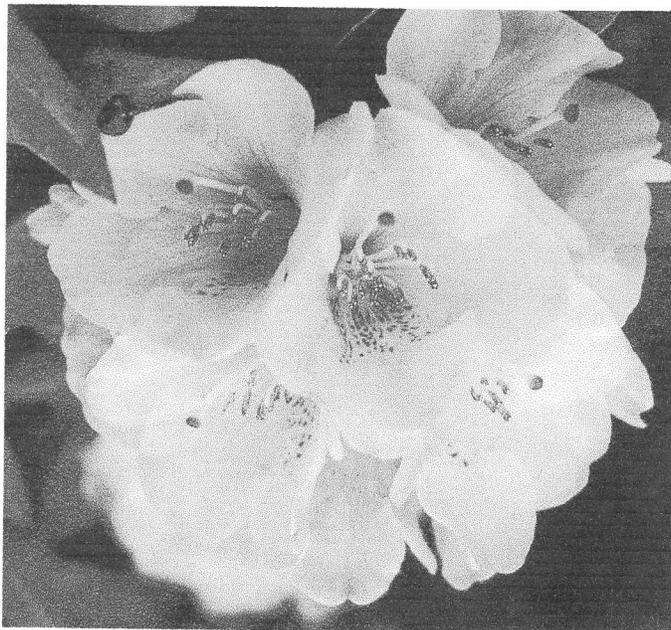
THE GREENERY

Lynn and Marilyn Watts, in Bellvue, Wash, have a nursery which they plan to downsize. Lynn often writes for the Seattle newsletters, and I have often used his advice for our own newsletter. He says: " After much thought we hve decided to drastically down-size our nursery. Our target date is May 1999 and we will commence selling most of our larger rhodos and many

smaller ones in early Oct. 1998. We are in the process of re-inventorying the entire nursery, but to give you a rough idea we have several thousand plants ranging from dwarfs to mature specimens. Approximately half of these plants are species, the remainder consist of named hybrids and natural hybrids grown from seed collected in the wild.

We have slashed our prices as we are desirous of placing these plants with rhodo collectors. Extra discounts will be given for quantity sales."

Address: 14450 NE 16th Place, Bellevue Wa 98007
Phone: (425) 641 1458
Email: watts-greenery@msn.com



GREEN INVADERS

Charles Elliott, who lives in Wales, writing in the Oct. 1997 issue of Horticulture, describes some of the horrors that have invaded the land. Reading this led me to think of different plants that have made it to Vancouver Island. The worst include Polygonum cuspidatum, "Japanese Knotweed", called bamboo by many people. It will take a great deal of space if allowed to, has white flowers in summer, and dies completely to the ground in winter. It is a cousin of Polygonum auberti, "Russian Vine", which can climb a 50 ft. tree or cover a barn in a couple of years. Beautiful but..

Rhodo ponticum, which hasn't yet taken over the country side here the way it has in England, Scotland and Wales.

Bracken - can be tamed by cutting it 3 times a year. If chopped, it makes good mulch. It doesn't usually invade gardens here unless you live beside

a forest or field.

Impatiens glandulifera, called by names such as Himalayan Balsom, Himalayan Orchid, Policeman's Helmet - they love moisture so have suffered this past two months. Because of the way the seeds pop out and away, everyone in Campbell River will soon have plants of this one.

Epilobium angustifolium, called Rosebay Willowherb in the UK and Fireweed here. This is not a pest in our gardens, for it seems to enjoy freshly logged mountainsides. Beekeepers take their bees up to the hills every summer to make our famous Vancouver Island Fireweed Honey. I would never consider this plant a pest.

Cytisus scoparius - Broom - strangely Mr. Elliott didn't mention it, but that is a real scourge on our Island. It is taking over the countryside, and many people have breathing difficulty when around it. Another seed popper, and as fast as one plant is chopped down, another hundred seeds germinate.

These carelessly introduced plants are a menace to the natural environment, and the death of prized natives.

THE VICTORIA COMPOST EDUCATION CENTRE

has a pamphlet "Leaf it to Compost" of which you can obtain a copy by phoning 250-386-9676. The Times'Colonist recently published a summary of useful information on the use of leaves in the garden.

None of us, of course, burn autumn leaves any more.

They make marvellous mulch for all garden plants, alone or mixed with other material.

They make an excellent organic addition to the compost pile. They provide a good source of carbon (add two parts of carbon (brown) to one part nitrogen (green) for making a properly working compost pile.

Leaves are high in nutrients and fibre. Up to 80% of the nutrients accumulated during the growing season are found in fallen leaves.

Leaves can also be put directly on the garden as a soil amendment for improving clay or sandy soils, while helping aeration and moisture holding capacity of all types of soil. If you dig leaves directly into the soil, with a good layer on top, they will all be broken down by spring. You can also shred leaves (a quick way is to pile them up in a corner of the garden, and run the lawn

mower back and forth over them a few times) and use them as a thick mulch. They suppress weeds, retain moisture, insulate plants from cold and heat and slowly add nutrients and organic matter to the soil. Some leaves are slightly more acidic than others, but that changes during the composting process, and the finished product is neutral pH.

If you have too many leaves, stockpile them in plastic bags or a chicken-wire enclosure. Use them the next summer, mixed with grass clippings and other nitrogen-rich material, to make more rich compost.

FALL PLANTING

The B.C. Landscape & Nursery Association gives good advice on why we should plant trees and shrubs in the fall. Alas, this present year, after many months of drought, my advice is "wait until it rains 2-4 in., dig large holes for the plants, fill them with water, then plant, using quantities of good wet compost or bark mulch to mix with the soil. If our warm dry sunny weather suddenly turns to frosty weather, forget about planting anything until perhaps February, and instead, rush frantically around with mulch and cover blooming plants with remay or old curtains".

Nevertheless, we will check

out the good advice given by the Nursery Association:

The ground is warm in fall, and there is (usually) good moisture content in the soil. New plants won't have to face summer stress until next year.

Local nurseries offer a good selection, often at great prices. How true - I have been finding some beautiful grasses, in full bloom, to add to the garden.

It is a more relaxed time to visit garden centres. Well-trained staff are available to offer advice. Also very true.

At summer's end, you have a good idea of what works - and what doesn't. Fall provides a great second chance to rearrange things, to fill a particular spot with something more appealing, to make design changes when you can more easily imagine the result.

I'd like to add to that - - and to move the poor rhodos that really suffered with too much sun this summer. At the end of Sept. I am still trying to give some plants extra water as well as covering them with curtains.

There is a reduced risk of airborne diseases that attack new spring growth.

Our B.C. autumns are worth every minute you can enjoy

outdoors.

Peace Arch Jeanie Robb
531-6770 3d Mon

Remember, container-grown trees and shrubs can be planted out any time of year that the ground is not frozen. (I put all my new grasses in larger pots, with lots of good soil, and they will stay there "until the rains come" or until next spring).

Fraser South Les Clay
531-5188 3d Wed

DATES OF MEETINGS

Here is a information about other clubs in District I of the ARS. If you plan a trip down-Island or to the mainland, you might like to attend a meeting of other rhodoholics.

Name of club Contact person
Phone Meeting Day

North Island Harry Wright
338-8345 2nd Tues

M.A.R.S Hilda Perry
752-9326 2nd Wed

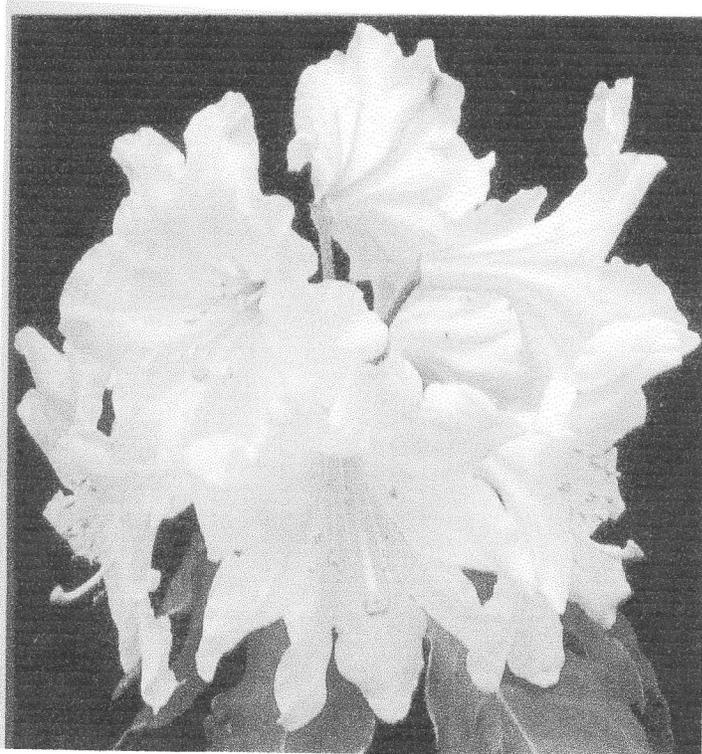
Nanaimo Ward Porter
390-3867 2nd Thurs

Cowichan Valley Margaret
deWeese 748-0538 1st Wed

Victoria Norma Buckley
477-2570 1st Thurs

Vancouver Harold Fearing
222-1467 3d Thurs

Fraser Valley Bob Porter
467-7010 4th Mon



R. auriculatum

SUMMER BLOOMERS

How often do you hear people say "Rhodos only bloom in April and May." Here are some that bloom later in the summer. Some of course, like R. Elizabeth and R. impeditum are repeat bloomers, throwing flowers twice or even three times a year.

R. auriculatum blooms in July or later. I often wonder what will happen to the new leaves

that open in August if we have a really cold winter? Eastern azaleas R. bakeri and R. prunifolium bloom in July, and R. tricanthum and R. nakaharae bloom during June or later.

Auriculatum hybrids such as Polar Bear bloom late, and others such as Tortoiseshell, Blue Jay, Independence Day, Swamp Beauty and Arthur Osborn are all late bloomers.