



# The RHODOTELLER

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## NORTH ISLAND RHODODENDRON



2006/2007 Executive:

**President**

Harry Wright.... 338-8345

**Vice-President**

Dave Crucq ..... 339-7845

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**Director: Publicity**

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Noni Godfrey ... 335-0717  
.....Nonigod@shaw.ca

**Social Committee:**

Evelyn Wright.. 339-7493

**Revenue Table Committee:**

Louise Casson.. 334-2331

**Historian:**

Lois Clyde..... 337-5754

The club meets the second  
Tuesday of the month  
(except May through August)  
at the United Church



Comox Avenue,  
Comox 7:30 p.m.

### Coming Events



**4 Sept 2007 – Executive Meeting**

Besides going back to school for all the kiddies...this month's events are as follows: Executive meeting will be held at the home of Dave and Marlene Crucq: 2301 Seabank Road, Courtenay.

*Executive Meeting begins at 2:00 p.m.*

**11 September 2007 —Regular Monthly Meeting**

**Program:** Bernie Guyader...*paradise is close to home!*

Bernie will be showing slides on the three seasons in Strathcona Park, mainly Mt. Washington and Paradise Meadows.

### President's View

(by Vice President: Dave Crucq)

As our summer hiatus draws to an end, we can look forward to the company of our fellow members at the fall and winter meetings. Thanks to all those who helped out at the CV rhodo gardens these past few months. As most gardeners know, staying on top of the work load ensures a beautiful garden, and many hands make less work.

Through the efforts of many of our members the gardens are looking better than ever this year and have received much praise and appreciation from locals and tourists alike. The city's summer workers, along with our own Nadine Beaudreau, have done their fair share of upkeep on the gardens this summer. For that we thank the "crew" and wish them well this coming season.

Part of the success of our work parties and the good turn out of workers, can be directly contributed to the wonderful "goodies" that have been supplied by some of the ladies. (at least that's what Dave G. says) Our garden hats are off to the ladies, we couldn't have done it without you!

For those of you that missed the bloom this past spring; it was more spectacular than ever before and our most knowledgeable visitors from Whidbey Island were suitable impressed.

As for our own gardens, it will soon be time to prepare for the coming winter months. Perhaps we can get a few of our members to write some articles on winter preparation of certain plants.

Since President Harry and Gwen will be away enjoying a holiday in New Brunswick, I will get my first opportunity to welcome everyone back to our usual meeting hall on Tuesday, September 11<sup>th</sup>, as I chair my first meeting. I look forward to seeing many of you there.

Vice President, Dave Crucq

## Member's Notes

(by Dave Godfrey)

Our chapter's annual wrap-up pot luck picnic took place on Saturday, June 16<sup>th</sup> at the home and garden of Paul & Lynn Wurz in Campbell River. Along with garden tour hosts Maureen and Mike Shipton of Royston and Joan Cavers of Fanny Bay as guests, about 20 members gathered for an afternoon of fun, food and friendship.

Although the weather had been threatening to put a damper on the afternoon, conditions allowed for an outdoor event which included a tour of the gardens, a scavenger hunt, and a challenging bocce tournament.

Lynn's scavenger hunt required finding 4 different types of ground cover, the names of 4 different hostas, ferns and rhodos, finding a peacock feather, as well as gathering a gallon pot of rhodo deadheads. Many thought this a pretty sneaky way for Paul to get help with deadheading his many rhodos. This would have definitely been the case had they chosen a 5 gallon pot to be filled! Eventually, the team of Don Law, John Shaughnessy, Ann Chevrier, and Dave Crucq was declared the winner by Judge Bernie Guyader.



A delicious meal was then enjoyed by all, followed by a fun bocce tournament. Most couples took up the challenge, even though some had never played the game before. The field of 10 teams narrowed down to Dave C. and Lily V. against John & Diana Scott in one semi-final game, with Noni and Dave G. against the Wurzs in the other. John & Diana had a close game going against Dave & Lily as the score "see-sawed back and

forth"! In the end, it was a 5 to 3 victory for the Scotts.

In the meantime, Dave and Noni who had advanced through the loser's bracket regained their form to take a 5 to 1 win over Paul & Lynn. This saw the Scotts and the Godfreys facing each other once again in the finals (The Scotts had defeated the Godfreys in the second round to bump them into the loser's bracket.)



Judge Brian Staton had to bring out the measure on several shots, as the level of play was intense. With the score once again "see-sawing back and forth", it was the Great Scotts who were the eventual victors, taking home the grand prize. Congratulations to all those who enjoyed the fun tournament.



### WESTERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE

The 2007 Western Regional Conference is scheduled for September 21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> in Newport, Oregon. Details can be found on the ARS website ([www.rhododendron.org](http://www.rhododendron.org)).

# Book Review

by Mary Palmer

The highlight of the afternoon was the surprise presentation of the ARS Bronze Award to NIRS secretary Diana Scott. On behalf of the NIRS, President Harry gave recognition to Diana for her many years of dedication and work on behalf of the North Island Chapter – a much deserved award indeed. Congratulations Diana!



Throughout the month of June, while still recovering from the many activities of May's "Rhododendron Month", many members helped with the deadheading parties held at the CV Rhodo Garden on the 14<sup>th</sup> and the 28<sup>th</sup>. And on July 11<sup>th</sup>, several NIRS members along with others from the CV Horticultural Society gave a much needed hand to long standing members Bernice and Gerry Morrison in their gardens on Aspen Road.

In closing, remember: All the flowers of tomorrow are the seeds of yesterday!

## The Green Bank of England

by Florence Hoatson,

from a book of poems entitled *"The Little White Gate"*  
Published in July, 1925 in Edinburgh, England

Have you seen the gold in the Green Bank of England?  
Wonderful, beautiful, lovely to behold-  
Aconite and coltsfoot, buttercup and daffodil,  
Crocus and celandine, and dandelion bold!

Have you found the gold in the Green Bank of England?  
You may go and take it - none of it is sold.  
Gorse, broom, and ragwort, bedstraw and cowslip,  
Kingcup and pansy, and silver-weed gold.

Yours is the gold in the Green Bank of England,  
Yours for the asking- treasury untold;  
Potentilla, primrose, yellow vetch, and trefoil,  
Pimpernel and hawkweed and pussy-willow gold.

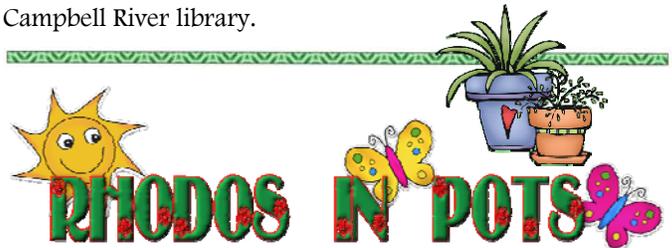
Submitted by Chris Aldred for all those British folk among us.

**IRISES** A Gardener's Encyclopedia,

**Author:** Claire Austin

**Publisher:** Timber Press 2005

This is a beautiful book - large and heavy and filled with an amazing amount of information about these lovely flowers. After the Introduction, which includes botany and classification, Iris societies and awards, use in medicine, cooking, and decoration, there are chapters on bearded, beardless, and bulbous irises, with many sub-titles and many lovely photographs of species and hybrid irises. Under Cultivation, you will find how to grow the plant, pests and diseases, and even hybridizing. As with Rhododendrons, it is impossible to keep up with the new hybrids that are produced every year, but you will find examples of the incredible amount of colours, shapes and sizes of iris flowers. If you are considering the use of irises of any kind to brighten up the rhodo beds in summer, be sure to borrow this book from one of the local libraries. I found it in the Campbell River library.



How often have you had no time to take a plant out of its pot and plant it in the ground? Why not leave it in a pot, perhaps a decorative one, for a few years to brighten the patio or balcony. Or use it to fill in an empty space in the garden, or to see if the plant is happy in a certain spot.

In his book "Rhododendrons" by John Street, many useful ideas are suggested, and I will quote some of them.

"Rhodos grow surprisingly well in containers, which can be used to good effect in a number of ways...The container can be plunged in the ground, giving the rhodo the appearance of a normal growing plant, but the container will protect the roots from any damaging infusion of lime (Mr. Street gardened in Britain). Rhodos in containers can also be brought into the house, where they can make an effective display, whether forced into flower early or allowed to flower normally.

Almost any container will do, but it is wise to avoid those made of cement or concrete, particularly if they are porous. Lime is again the reason, for if the roots were to penetrate the material, the plants might suffer. Because Rhodos are surface-rooting, it is better to choose containers that are short and fat rather than tall and thin; this allows room for the roots to spread and for the application of a mulch to feed them.

Good drainage is important. Container grown plants from garden centres should be repotted, placing concave crocks over the holes in the pots." Mr. Street recommended a well-mixed layer of coarse peat or leaf mold, loam, rotted cow



manure and perlite . Leave enough space for watering at the top of the container.

Watering is the most important part of growing Rhodos in containers. During the growing and flowering period they need plenty of water (not to be waterlogged). Once the year's growth is made, they need much less water but must never be allowed to become dried out. They need to make next year's flower buds at this time, and if given too much water will make new leaf growth by growing through the flower bud. This new, soft growth will be vulnerable to an early autumn frost.

"Rhodos may be forced into flower easily and even the protection of a cold greenhouse will bring them on a good two weeks ahead of their normal time. They should not be brought in under glass until they have suffered a slight frost in the open. They will then react more readily to the kinder conditions, and a little heat and regular sprays with warm water will make them flower even earlier." Shade will not be necessary until the sun becomes stronger in the spring.

## Garden Chatter Natter and Notes

(by Mary Palmer)

Another article in the Victoria Colonist newspaper, reminds us that we can easily have more very dry summers, so why not prepare for them by looking at the garden with a view to XERISCAPING? This word means water-efficient landscaping. It is pronounced "zerry scape" and comes from the Greek word xeros meaning dry. According to this writer, Susan Ramsay, who has a dry garden in Victoria, 60% of water consumption is used for residential needs, and 50% of that is used in gardens.

Think of your garden as a series of zones. Place drought-tolerant plants in the "hot spots" where they will need less water and fertilizer than plants that need water. These can be placed in shade or in a lower part of the garden where water might drain down.

Think also of native plants that have become used to our hot dry summers and wet winters. There are many mahonias for instance, tall and short and ground-cover that offer flowers, berries, and often bright red leaves in winter.

"All drought-tolerant plants need watering for the first two years, until they become established. Weeding, pruning and deadheading are still required but plants that are not water-stressed will require much less pest and disease management."

Where does this leave our Rhodos, that need more water than many plants. I have found they will survive quite nicely on a good drink of water per week. This summer, rain has given us that several times. Rhodos do need a certain amount of shade, particularly from the intense afternoon heat that is common here at times in May or June. New leaves are not able to withstand this onslaught. Perhaps one or two plants should be moved into a more protected corner, or throw an old curtain over them for a few days.

As is usual here, we are having an interesting year. The rhodos bloomed as they have never done before, even though they suffered through several hotter than normal summers. I found it necessary to spend many hours just deadheading when the flowers faded. The rain we had in May, June and



July meant it was not necessary to use the hose very often. But the weeds grew and grew and lawn edges had to be trimmed often. Oh well, there is always something to complain about, it seems.

Talking about deadheading, and why we feel it necessary to do it. This year, there were sometimes rain showers just when certain rhodos (especially azaleas) were in full bloom. The flowers drooped, turned brown, and needed to be deadheaded because the plants looked so untidy. Some I didn't get to for weeks, and found the plants had produced seed pods by the hundreds. These, I felt, sap the plant of nutrients, so they had to go. Several plants didn't get done until July, when I found that either there was no sign of new growth at those terminals, or several new stems had shot out to 6" or more. It seems deadheading is very important. We are left with the question "What about the material 20 feet in the air?" Well, tough. I am not going to climb a ladder to reach them. Maybe those plants will slow down a bit and not bloom that high again. Maybe.

How about our usual loud complaint about SLUGS? Well, everyone I have talked to has remarked there are much fewer slugs this year than usual. I mean the big brown or black "European" slugs. I agree, I usually find one a day sometimes two. I am not counting the tiny grey ones, for they are hard to find. Only a few Hosta leaves have been nibbled, so no complaints there. Of course they could have been nibbled by deer or rabbits.

Talking of deer, I have found a new product in nurseries, named BOBBEX, which really seems to work at discouraging deer. It smells awful and I have to change my clothes if a bit of spray lands on me, but it really works. They advise re-spraying if new growth or flowers open out, and I spray again sometimes after rain, but it may not be necessary.

I feel quite brave at this time, and may even try a few tulips this fall. They will be sprayed as soon as I spot the leaves next January-March, depending on what kind of winter we have.

## Gardening Hints for Fall

Helen Chesnut, writing in the Victoria Colonist Aug. 18, reminded us of a wonderful idea for setting out pots of colour for the winter season. We don't know, as usual, what kind of fall and winter we might have, but we can always put pots in a cold greenhouse or garage for a few weeks if necessary. I am feeling bold enough to try ornamental cabbage and kale again, now that I have a supply of BOBBEX on hand. The deer have not yet nibbled on any plants sprayed with this material, even though it has rained the same night. (and yes, isn't this August just amazing? I have hardly used my drip and sprinkle watering system this year!)

Here is an update on BOBBEX. A gardening friend told me on Aug. 25 that Bobbex has not prevented the deer from eating several of her plants - Crocosmea for instance.

Here are some of the plants Helen recommends for colour in your pots. She is very fond of the bright-leaved Heucheras we can choose. The deer ate mine BB (before Bobbex) but I am feeling interested in trying them again. Some of Helen's plants have grown long, woody bases which she cuts back to

2" to sprout again. Various grasses look lovely with the heucheras. You can add a few crocus bulbs to this display.

There are many dwarf evergreens - little cedars, chamaecyparis, pines, that look so perky in the winter, and mixed with plants with coloured leaves, or bulbs which will bloom in early spring - and don't forget the winter-blooming heathers that will withstand anything the winter deals us.

Ms. Chesnut also described in her column a new book on the market which is "full of practical tips and inspiration for interesting container gardens year round". With more people moving into smaller homes, patio homes, and apartments with balconies or patios, gardening in pots is becoming an alternative to garden beds. "Potters and lovers of fine pots, as well as gardeners, will be fascinated by the book. Each chapter begins with seasonal goings-on at the pottery, then moves into the garden to explore projects for the season before closing with a plant list." In autumn, for instance, luxuriant photos accompany suggestions for plants which can be in containers, such as dahlias and chrysanthus, cyclamen, colchicum, grasses, pansies, and various succulents. *(Another note by MP: the first cyclamen hederatfolius and colchicums are in bloom.)*

Here are some suggestions for a winter pot of colour. Red-berried Skimmia, winter-flowering heather, a bronze grass, purple Heuchera, Carex "Evergold", ornamental winter cabbage, and crocus.

Jim Keeling, author of the book, is the founder of the Whichford Pottery in Warwickshire, and is obviously a gardener as well as a potter. CONTAINER GARDENING THROUGH THE SEASONS, published by Raincoast Books, \$29.95, paperback.

## Snippets From Sayward

(by Rose-Marie Silkens)

The last few letters from Sayward were all about plants I lost after that last brutal winter. Happily, I have some good news to share this time.

I don't grow a lot of roses here, as our very damp conditions, much cooler than even Campbell River, make them a challenge. My father had a beautiful rose garden here, and after his death, when I came to Sayward only on weekends and holidays, I was constantly distressed as one treasured plant after another gave up the battle. In fact, that experience is what sparked my interest in rhododendrons. However, it's difficult to be a gardener without ever growing roses. Encouraged by some good advice, I began my rediscovery of rose gardening by planting only own-root plants.

One of my earliest acquisitions was the beautiful English rose 'Abraham Derby,' purchased from the Quinns on Hornby Island. It became a huge plant,

reliably floriferous every year and of course one of my favourites. Last year it suddenly showed signs of distress, not growing out after spring pruning as it normally did. On pruning in March all the wood appeared dead, and by June it hadn't leafed out at all. I cut it back right to the ground, but couldn't bring myself to dig it up. That was a good thing. In late June, new growth emerged from below the ground, and now, in the third week of August, 'Abraham Derby' is almost as large as it was, and is generously blooming once more. Certainly, this experience is another vindication of planting own-root roses

The summer issue of *Garden Wise* magazine has an article on the charming gardens at Hollyhock, an educational retreat on Cortes Island. A few weeks ago we took our boat there, anchoring off Hollyhock's beach and rowing to shore. (I'm sure we entertained the visitors, as our dogs had to be left on the boat, and they made sure our arrival was anything but discreet.) The vegetarian, garden-vegetable lunch was lovely, but the highlight for me was exploring the gardens. I was immediately struck by their genuinely functional, purposeful nature. Everything was planted with an eye not only to its usefulness as food, medicine or cut flower, but also to its companionableness with other plants and its ease of access for cultivation as well. Fragrant flowers are the norm, as are single ones. There are a few semi-double hollyhocks, but none of the pastel double ones that look like Kleenex flowers. Bees and beneficial insects are as numerous as the blooms. It was hard to tear ourselves away.

Happily, the gift shop sells seeds from the garden, so I could bring home poppies and hollyhocks to broaden the gene pool in my own garden.

## Yellow Rhodod

When I first started collecting rhododendrons, there were very few with yellow coloured flowers in the nurseries, and somehow I ended up with white, red, pink or purple. Now that they have all grown up to be large plants, taking up all the room there is, I want yellow. I went through Greer's Guidebook, and picked out some plants that sound just lovely. They are all hardy here, (from -5F to +5F) should be safe enough, unless we get another of those extremely cold winters.

**R. SUNSPRAY**, (Alice Franklin x Crest), hardy to -5F, with flowers yellowier and larger than Crest, and better foliage and better habit. Sounds like a winner.

How about **R. MORNING SUNSHINE**, a Whitney hybrid, unknown parentage, hardy to +5F, Primrose-yellow flowers with 7 lobes, 4" across, in a truss of 14.

**TOP BANANA** is another Whitney hybrid, a Hotei hybrid, hardy to 0F, a good yellow but because it has a tendency for root rot, needs perfect drainage in a raised bed.

**HOTEI** is a nice canary yellow and big calyx, and also needs good drainage.

**YELLOW PAGES**, another Whitney hybrid of unknown parentage, is a vibrant yellow.

The plant can spread sideways to 6 Ft. Hardy to 0F.

**ODEE WRIGHT** is hardy to -5F, has waxy green leaves and clean yellow trusses, exceptionally beautiful, says Harold Greer.

This is just a few of these lovely yellow rhodos. It will be difficult to decide which of these would be happy in my garden. Or should I try one of the others described in Greer's book, such as R. Lemon Marmalade or how about R. Tiddley Winks. Yes, Tiddley Winks has a HUGE calyx. It is hardy to 0F. Now, how to find one in a nursery?

I would like to point out that it is next to impossible to find just the right rhodo in an ordinary nursery. You must check with our specialist members who not only stock the unusual, but are constantly taking cuttings, starting plants from seed, or can add your request to an order from the Mainland, so that you should be able to find just what you want, or a reasonable substitute.

## Some Interesting Rhodos in the Molly Smith Garden

Next time you drive down to Oregon, be sure to make a visit to this garden, planned and cared for by Cecil and Molly Smith during their lifetimes. Now it is operated by groups of volunteers from several ARS chapters, including Portland, Willamette and Tualatin. Drive down the I-5, south of Portland, to Exit 278, where you drive west on Ehlen Road, which changes name several times until it ends at 219. Turn right on 219 and left on Champoeg Rd then straight ahead to Raybell Rd. A short distance west on Raybell Road brings you to the garden. The map makes it look quite simple - ask the librarian for a copy if you plan to make the trip.

Now to the Rhodos described in the Nov. 2006 newsletter from the garden:

**R. anrheinense**, a compact rounded shrub with rounded flower and leaf buds, leaves oblong-lanceolate with recurved edges. Very free-flowering pink or white flowers in April or May. A tough species, prefers shade. This plant is hardy to -10F.

**R. maculiferum**, a compact shrub or small tree with oval leaves and white or pale pink flowers, blotched red (or a deep black-purple according to Greer), blooms early - March-April and is hardy to +5F.

**R. morii**, an erect or spreading shrub or small tree, with oblong-lanceolate leaves and white or white flushed rose flowers with crimson spots or blotches for accent. It blooms from March to May and is hardy to -10F.

**R. pachysanthum** is a compact, dense shrub with wonderful foliage - the upper surface is covered with silvery tomentum (brown if grown in shade), and the lower surface is a thick, dense, woolly indumentum, pale changing to a rich, rusty brown at maturity. The elegant flowers are white to pale pink. Blooming time is March to April and the plant is hardy to -5F. A recent introduction from Taiwan and expected to be "the next Yakushmanum".

**R. pachytrichum**, another large rounded shrub or small tree. The name means "with thick hairs" and the picture shows these on leaves and stems. The flowers are pink to rose to rose magenta with a maroon blotch and spots. Hardy to -5F.

**R. pseudochrysanthum** is a superb species, widely grown. It can vary in height from dwarf (growing at 13,000 feet on a Taiwanese mountain) to 9-10 ft. Thick rigid leaves with recurved edges and a little indumentum, pink buds open to white or pink-flushed white. Hardy to -10F, blooms March to May.

**R. strigillosum** is a superb shrub or small tree. Branchlets are adorned in long distinctive bristles. It has sticky leaf-buds and oblong-lanceolate leaves with recurved edges. Young leaves have bristles and short, stalked hairs. Flowers are deep red to crimson and the plant blooms early in the year, Feb. to May. Hardy to +5F.

All of these plants are in Subsection Maculifera, Section Ponticum, Subgenus Hymenanthes. These are just a few of the beautiful Rhodos to be seen in Cecil and Molly Smith garden, and well worth a visit if you travel down that way.



## Mango, Avocado and Black Bean Salad

(As requested from Barb Staton for those who attended the Pot Luck Wrap Up Picnic .....a meal in itself)

### Salad:

- 1 540 ml can rinsed black beans
- 1 med. Spanish onion (diced)
- 1 red pepper (diced)
- 1 260 ml can of corn (rinsed)
- 2 avocados (peeled and diced)
- 1 - 2 mangoes (peeled and diced)

### Dressing:

- 1 - 3 cloves of garlic (crushed)
- 6 - 8 slices jalapeno (diced)
- 2 - 3 T lime juice
- 60 ml olive oil
- 10 ml ground coriander

Mix all ingredients except avocados and mangoes together in a large bowl

Mix dressing ingredients well, add dressing to salad, toss and let marinade 2- 3 hours.

Add avocados and mangoes up to one hour before serving

