



NOVEMBER

*North Island
Rhododendron
Society
2009/2010 Executive*

- President**
Diana Scott..... 338-0208
- Vice-President**
Dave Crucq 941-1957
- Past President:**
Harry Wright..... 338-8345
- Secretary**
Pauline Thompson..... 339-3423
- Treasurer**
Dave Godfrey..... 335-0717
- Director: Ways & Means**
Nadine Boudreau..... 339-0909
- Director: Membership**
Brian Staton 337-5228
- Director: Publicity**
Chris Aldred..... 335-3221
- Director: Newsletter/Library**
Noni Godfrey 335-0717
..... nonigod@shaw.ca
- Social Committee:**
Marleen Crucq..... 941-1957
- Revenue Table Committee:**
Louise Casson 334-2331
- Sunshine Lady:**
Pauline Bonney 339-7594

The club meets at 7:30 p.m
the second Tuesday of each month
(except May through August)
United Church in Comox.

COMING EVENTS

3rd November 2009- Executive Meeting 2:00 pm

The executive meeting will be held at the home of Gwen and Harry Wright, Haida Gold Gardens at 769 Chaster Road Courtenay.



10th November 2009- Regular Monthly Meeting



"Rhodo Trekking and Vireyas"
~Presented by Dr. Glen Jamieson~

Dr. Glen Jamieson has a B.Sc. in Agriculture from McGill University, but has been a research scientist with Fisheries and Oceans Canada for over 30 years. Now partially retired from the DFO, he is a keen gardener with an extensive one acre property in Parksville and is a member of the MARS chapter, receiving a Bronze Medal award in 2007.

Glen has traveled extensively in both Central and South America and Asia, and now guides botanical and wildlife trips to these destinations. Since 1999, he has established a large tropical rhododendron (Vireyas) collection and now is a strong advocate of these beautiful plants. Vireyas, you may recall, are those rhododendrons that disguise themselves with brilliantly tropical colours and perfumes, and grow in locales similarly exotic. Glen will speak to us about his travels, and the care and feeding of these glamorous plants.

As of January 2009, Glen became the Editor of the Journal of the American Rhododendron Society (JARS) and will provide a short educational on his new position with the ARS.

President's View

...by Diana Scott

Once again the colour in the Valley is spectacular – one of the blessings of a climate with distinct seasons. Although a number of shrubs and trees have already dropped their leaves, many more are in their glory.

Euonymus alata



For stunning reds, Euonymus alata (burning bush) put on a dazzling show earlier this fall, and of the many maples in our yard Osakazuki had to be the stand-out with its brilliant red foliage.

Osakazuki



Our small Stewartia pseudocamellia has been a beacon in the yard with its oranges, reds and yellows, and Fothergilla gardenii has added burgundy to that colour mix. Our Rhododendrons are very much a part of the fall colour event – deciduous azaleas are showing reds, yellows, and burgundy; the PJM leaves have turned almost purple, and many of the evergreen azaleas have a mixture of reds and oranges with their green leaves. From the brilliant colours of the deciduous trees and shrubs, to the magnificent colour hues of many of our rhododendrons and azaleas, the show has been spectacular.

Changes in the length of daylight and temperature in the Fall cause the leaves to stop their food-making process. The chlorophyll that they've been producing all summer breaks down, the green colour disappears, and the yellow and orange colours which have been masked by the green become visible. Other chemical changes may be taking place at the same time – which forms the reds, purples and brilliant oranges that wow us each Fall. It's said that warm wet springs, favourable summer weather, and warm sunny fall days with cool nights produce the most brilliant autumn colours. Hallelujah!

To add to our fall colour display, 'Christmas Cheer' is in full bloom. The buds started opening in late September, many

flowers were open throughout October, and it is now in full bloom. I don't think I'll see much colour on her next spring.



We are members of the BC Council of Garden Clubs, and a look at their website will give you a sense of the wide variety of garden-related clubs that we have in our province.

<http://www.bcgardenclubs.com/index.html>

NIRS has been celebrating our 25th year in 2009, and BCCGC has noted that at least two of the oldest clubs are over 100, 31 are over 50 and at least 16 are in the 25-50 year age bracket. BCCGC is close to 70 years old itself and is interested in developing a historical Archival Record of Gardening in BC over the years. If any of our members would be interested in collaborating in such a venture, they would be delighted to hear from you.

See you at the meeting! D

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Autumnal FACE.
— JOHN DONNE

Members Notes

by Dave Godfrey

On Oct. 13th, 40 Members and 7 guests attended our meeting. We welcome two new members to our chapter, Arthur Ralfs and Helena Zukowski (Stewart), and look forward to their participation at future meetings and events. Congratulations to Lois Clyde as the lucky winner of the raffle for R. Chapeau, and guest Charles Hall who won the door prize "Western Garden Book" donated by Diana Scott.

During the business portion of the meeting, Ross Munro gave a short educational and answered several questions on mason bees and bee houses. It was then time to introduce our guest speaker, Tom Carter from Parksville. Since the early 1990's, Tom has been travelling to Nepal to explore the Himalayan mountains. In 1998, Tom began organizing and leading tours of the region for those individuals interested in learning more about the diversity of the region.



Tom explained, "All tours of Nepal begin and end in Kathmandu, the capital and largest metropolitan city." Perched on the southern slopes of the Himalayan Mountains, Nepal is a country of highly diverse and rich geography, culture, and religions. The mountains north contains eight of the world's ten highest mountains, including the highest, Mount Everest. Tom's

digital and slide presentations showed both the culture of the people and beauty of the land. From the subtropical lowlands, through the rhododendron forests of the mountain passes, to the snow capped mountains, the presentation captured the diversity of this remote South Asian country.

For additional information and photographs, check out Tom's website at: www.moonmountainadventures.com - or follow the link on our NIRS website.

During the absence of the Crucq's for the winter months, Louise Casson has agreed to take over from Marleen as our Social Chair; while Christine Aldred will relieve Louise at the Revenue Table. Thank you ladies for making these arrangements. And speaking of the social committee, we are

in need of some new members with new ideas for our Christmas party. Yes, December is just around the corner and our traditional pot-luck party will not happen without the assistance of members willing to help organize it. So if you would like to help with the party this year, please contact President Diana soon!

As with most groups or organizations, volunteers are the lifeblood of our chapter. Without them, the organization would collapse in very short order. We are fortunate to have a group of dedicate members who donate their time and efforts for the betterment of the club. Many members of the executive committee continue to provide their knowledge and experience term after term, as they enjoy the duties involved. However, occasionally members want or need to step down from the executive, and as such others need to take their place. We encourage new members to give consideration to joining the executive in one capacity or another. No position is overly demanding of time or experience, and there are always others available to call upon for advice or assistance.

Although our elections are not held until next May, now is the time to let others on the executive know if you are interested in joining "the team." The quiet months from now until May will give you time to learn the ropes, so to speak. So don't be shy, let us know your areas of interest and we'll fit you in. After all, without the leadership of our executive, there will be no club for members to enjoy!

As we are nearing the end of this calendar year, we are in the process of publishing our second annual members' handbook. In addition to information about our chapter, the handbook also includes a roster of current members. Therefore it is important to have your dues paid before December in order to be included on the list. If you can't make the meeting, simply mail a \$35 cheque to N.I.R.S. at the club address on the footer of the newsletter's front page. This will also ensure that you receive your winter (January) issue of "The Journal" magazine from the ARS. Our guest speaker for November, Glen Jamieson from the MARS chapter in Qualicum, is the new editor for the ARS "Journal." Before his presentation on Vireyas, Glen will give a short educational on the ARS and his position. So be sure to attend the meeting to be both entertained and educated.

And finally, a reminder for members to wear your name tags to the meetings. This not only makes it easy for new members and guests to get to know you by name, but if you purchase some raffle tickets you will receive an extra ticket... just for wearing your tag. After all, Lois won the raffle on just such a ticket last month, and you might too!

 Fall is in the AIR

Garden Chatter, Natter and Notes

(Information from Coastal Grower – Autumn 1996)

Rhododendrons are one reason gardeners love our area, and November is the best time to plant or replant these beauties. Plants put in the ground now establish better and faster than those planted in the spring.

The general rule of thumb for planting (or transplanting) is that the later in spring you plant, the more you will have to water for the first year. Then once the plant takes hold, you should be able resume a more normal watering schedule. They do have some specific needs to bear in mind as you choose the planting site.

“WASH” is the key. “W” for water – a minimum of one inch per week year-round, either from natural rain or from whatever method you have available. But a hot, dry site will not fill the bill regardless of the amount of water you want to pour into it. Conversely, rhodos don’t like to have their roots in moist soil, so a well drained site is equally critical. “A” for acid – the soil should be in the pH range of 5.0 to 6.0. “S” for shade – a general rule of thumb is the larger the leaf, the more shade the plant will need. However, they do need some sun to flower well. For example, plants with a five inch long leaf need an average of six hours of sunshine in mid-summer in order to set flower buds. This is somewhat modified in the case of red varieties, which seem to be more sun-tolerant than other colours, but in each case you might want to investigate the requirements of a particular plant you have chosen. And finally “H” is for humus content of the planting bed, which should be 50% of the backfill soil mix. This can be in the form of peat moss, compost, oak leaf mulch, shredded bark, or a combination of any of the above.

The planting hole does not need to be deep – usually about 12” is sufficient, but should be at least three times as wide (some say five) as the existing root ball or container. This allows for humus rich area as the shallow, surface roots spread out. When placing the plant in the hole, be sure that it is no deeper than it was in the container. Some bone meal mixed in the backfill soil is good, but no other fertilizer is needed at this time. Mulching with a nice fluffy layer of shredded bark or bark mixed with oak leaves will also be appreciated. (Oak leaves because they are acidic.)

If you have a rhodo that seems “sick” this would be a good time to try to correct the situation. Dig straight down at the drip line to a depth of about 12”. Small plants will be no problem to lift, but for a larger plant you may need to “lever” it out with the aid of a plank. Slide it onto a tarp for easy movement. If the site seems to have been the problem,

consider changing the location. But if you can’t, then make a properly amended hole and enlarge it more than you normally would widthwise. Replant and keep well watered. This will often do the trick, but do remember that plants are living things and there are some that are sickly and will never amount to much, so you may occasionally get one that resists all efforts. In this case, you may find that replacement is in order.

Member's Profile



**Noni
Godfrey**



As with so many home gardeners, Noni’s interest in gardening began at an early age while ‘helping’ her grandparents to garden in Sackville, New Brunswick. Growing flowers and vegetables was one of the many hobbies she learned from them.

As the daughter of an Air Force family, Noni was rarely in a climate suitable for gardening, until she and husband Dave moved to Vancouver Island in the early 1970’s. While stationed at Esquimalt and Comox, Noni’s time was mostly spent working and raising a young family. Her gardening interests were mainly confined to reading books and magazines.

In 1977, Dave transferred from Air Traffic Control in the military to Vessel Traffic Control in the Coast Guard, and the family was stationed to Ucluelet on Vancouver Island’s west coast. It was here that time and property allowed Noni to invest in such hobbies as golfing and gardening.

Shortly after settling in Ucluelet, the Godfreys became friends with Ken & Dot Gibson of Tofino. It was through this friendship that Noni acquired the beginnings of her interests in rhododendrons. Who better to learn about rhododendrons from than the likes of Ken Gibson?

Noni had a modest, but colourful garden during their 24 years in Ucluelet; however gardening in the harsh growing conditions of the west coast always provided an extra challenge. With an average rainfall of nearly 14 feet each year, this meant the garden soils needed constant conditioning, and plants needed good drainage to survive. As her reward, Noni always received many accolades for her gardening efforts, since

she had one of the best and most colourful gardens in the community.

Upon their retirement move to Union Bay in 2002, their friendship with the Gibsons led to an introduction to the NIRS. With the purchase of a mostly undeveloped half acre property, work began with building a large feature fish pond and rhodo garden in the back yard. Brick walls and terraced gardens began to spring up all around the property, as rhododendrons and many varieties of companion plants filled all available spaces. Noni is definitely the architect of these wonderful gardens, while Dave helps with much of the manual labour, realizing that his gardening knowledge is a mere fraction of Noni's.

In recent years, the Godfrey's property has been featured on both the NIRS and Hort Society's summer garden tours. It is obvious from her vast knowledge of plants and garden techniques that Noni never lost her gardening interests which grew from the seeds planted by her grandparents so many years ago.



Wollemia nobilis now happily resides in my Powell River woodland setting and it is an eye-popper!

W. nobilis is now in the world-wide nursery trade as a result of a large scale effort from Australia to preserve and promote this so-called 'Jurassic plant' which came perilously close to extinction. It is known from fossil evidence to have had a much wider natural range dating back millions of years. The exact location of the few extant groves discovered by Noble are kept secret to protect them from encroachment, but an aggressive propagation program has made the tree available to curious amateurs like you and me.

Dubbed the Wollemi Pine [wall-i-my— sounds like tall am I], it is an evergreen, but certainly not a pine. It's a member of the Araucariaceae family along with the familiar Norfolk Island Pine (*Araucaria heterophylla*, native of Norfolk Is. in the Pacific) and the Monkey Puzzle tree (*A. araucana*, native of S. America). The native representatives of this family in Australia include the 'Hoop Pine' (*A. cunninghamii*) and the 'Bunya Pine' (*A. bidwillii*) which are possibly cousins of *W. nobilis*. All of these Araucariaceae species must have had a common ancestor from the ancient Gondwana Land of the southern hemisphere. The Wollemi is hardy in Canada (so far), only time will tell if it will become permanently established here.

The look of the tree is unique and lovely. It has a fern-like foliage which comes from the pinnate arrangement of flattened needles splayed out in horizontal tiers. It is slightly reminiscent of certain yew tree foliage but the symmetrical branching pattern lends a uniquely 'Jurassic' look which is eye-catching and attractive. Equally amazing is the appearance of the bark on older trunks. It has an odd bubbly texture and look, which sets it apart compared to any other tree.

To learn more see: www.wollemipine.com and wollemipine.co.uk



Development of new growth—the foliage all emanates from a central stem

RHODODENDRON COMPANION PLANTS TRY A PREHISTORIC TREE

David Moore, member at large, saying hello from Powell River. As suggested by our newsletter editor, Noni, I have put together a short article for use in The Rhodoteller.

Interesting trees are one of my passions and we're lucky to have enough room around our place to plant some. The topic of this article is the Wollemi Pine recently introduced from Australia. I planted one here in the summer of 2008 having purchased the little seedling from Brian Minter the year before. I over-wintered it first in our unheated greenhouse and then planted it out. It made it through last winter's horrendous freeze-ups, but I did protect it with a wire cage draped with plastic to keep the snow from crushing the poor thing.

Rhododendrons dominate our woodland gardens, but 'companion' plants are very important to us in all their forms, be they trees, shrubs or perennials.

I love my rhododendrons, every one of them, but that doesn't stop me from seeking out interesting and unusual trees to plant in combination with rhodos and other woodland plants.

Nothing gets news from the world of plants (our world, dear reader) into newspaper headlines like the discovery of a new tree species. This happened in Australia in September 1994 when a parks service officer named David Noble stumbled upon a grove of trees he could not identify located in the Wollemi National Park in New South Wales. Hats off to David Noble, I say, because a Wollemi Pine (*Wollemia nobilis*) now happily resides in my Powell River woodland setting and it is an eye-popper!

Have a nice Fall!

Tidbits...



New Alternate Director for ARS District 1:

Congratulations to Mary Parker of Nanaimo who has been elected by acclamation as the Alternate Director for ARS District 1 (BC). Having assumed this position, she is now the district's nominee for

Director and will take over that job when Ron Knight's term is completed at the end of May 2010. Mary is a veteran rhododendron collector. She is a past-president of the Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society and has experience on ARS committees. Mary is known as a very friendly and out-going person and District 1 is fortunate to have her as part of the leadership team.

The Ultimate Rhododendron Conference — April 9 - 11, 2010:

The conference is being held at Canada's premier rhododendron garden: UBC Botanical Garden, Vancouver. It's designed for all gardeners who want to learn more about rhododendrons. The conference features classroom and field experiences at 2 learning levels taught by Douglas Justice and Ron Knight, tours of 3 world-class gardens, rhodo sales, and on-campus suite accommodation. Veteran rhododendron collectors will enjoy Douglas' advanced classes and Ron Knight's novice classes will be a great place for newer club members to learn all the basics of rhododendron culture and care.

Conference registrations are arriving each week from rhodophiles up and down the West Coast. In November, thanks to BC Council of Garden Clubs' president Louis Peterson (former president of Vancouver Rhododendron Society); all of their members will be receiving an information package. Rhododendron club members are reminded to **send in registrations now** in order to ensure that one of the 100 conference spaces is reserved for you and you are eligible for the early booking discount (\$130 before December 31st; \$155 after). Conference details and a printable registration form may be obtained from the District 1 website: www.rhodos.ca

(click on "registration form" and "information" halfway down the page under April 9 - 11).

Photography in the Garden:

Our March meeting will focus on getting our photographic creativity revved up for the spring season. Ron Knight, Director of District 1, retired educator, and great photographer will work with us on getting better garden pictures using our digital cameras. As part of his presentation he will incorporate some of our own photos - ones that we may not be happy with - and explore ways to move an 'okay' photo to a 'wow' photo. Several of members have already sent in photos, but we still need a few more. If you'd be willing to have one or more of your photos (anonymous) worked on and discussed as part of the presentation please email Diana Scott at diascott@telus.net

Recipe Requests

Survival Cookies

(Corinne Innes)

1 C butter softened	1 C brown sugar
2 eggs	2 tsp vanilla

Cream above together

1 1/2 C flour (or whole wheat)	3/4 tsp baking soda
1/4 tsp salt	2 C large flake oats
1 C milk chocolate kisses	1/2 C white choc chips
3/4 C dried cranberries	3/4 C raisins

Mix flour, soda, oats and salt to the creamed mixture. Add remainder of ingredients.

I also added flax seeds, sunflower seeds, pecans. One macadamia nut in each cookie is great, Drop by massive spoonfuls onto prepared cookie sheet-refrigerate 1 hour and then bake for 13minutes at 350 degrees.Eat- Enjoy- Repeat !!

