



The Rhodoteller

www.nirs.rhodos.ca

Remembrance Day... 

NOVEMBER

North Island Rhododendron Society

2011/2012 Executive

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Vice-President

Paul Wurz287-4301

Past President:

Harry Wright.....338-8345

Secretary

Pauline Thompson339-3423

Treasurer

Dave Godfrey335-0717

Director: Ways & Means

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Director: Membership

Brian Staton337-5228

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Chris Aldred335-3221

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..... nonigod@shaw.ca

Social Committee:

Louise Casson.....334-2331

Publicity:

Helena Stewart.....339-1733

Sunshine Lady:

Nancy Munro.....334-3719

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

COMING EVENTS

1st November 2011 - Executive Meeting 2:00 pm

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

8th November 2011 - Regular Monthly Meeting

"To MARS and Back....Part 2"

~Presented by Garth Wedemire~



Guest speaker for our November meeting will once again be Garth Wedemire of Pitt Meadows. Garth will be showing Part 2 of his PowerPoint slide program called "To MARS and Back".

This presentation features some of the many wonderful gardens on a tour of the Tsawwassen and South Surrey areas enjoyed by members of the Mount Arrowsmith (MARS) chapter. Their visit was the reciprocal of one previously enjoyed by members of the Peace Arch (PARS) chapter in the South Surrey area of the lower mainland.

Autumn is a second spring when every leaf is a flower. ~Albert Camus

President's View

...by Diana Scott

Philosopher Albert Camus said that 'Autumn is a second spring when every leaf is a flower' and I can't help but agree with him. I love the colour that fall brings to the garden. If the winds haven't been too harsh, the display from the many deciduous shrubs and trees can be nothing short of magnificent. A number of our rhodos like to get into the picture, especially the evergreen azaleas that combine their usual green with tones of red, purple and orange. I particularly appreciate the leaves of many of the PJM rhodos at this time of year, as the greens turn from reddish to a kind of mahogany colour as the weather turns colder. Many plants that were resting quietly in their 'greens' all summer are looking pretty spiffy right now in the garden!

A rhodo that can be considered quite 'spiffy' is our featured species this month - *R. lutescens*, a *Lepidote rhododendron*; subsection *Triflora*. NIRS associate member Susan Lightburn has some great photographs of *lutescens* on the *hirsutum* website, including several of the stunning new foliage. The long narrow leaves are flame red and spectacular! *R. lutescens* is an upright, somewhat 'willowy' shrub, originally from China. It is an early bloomer, with smallish flowers which can be pale to deep yellow depending on the plant. Some growers advise growing *lutescens* in the sun to promote more flowers and help retain some of the red tint to the leaves.



R. lutescens



This great plant was donated by Ken Webb and grown on by the club. It will be one of the raffle prizes at our November meeting and will be going home with some lucky member or guest!

It's hard to believe that our next meeting will be the Christmas Party. Watch for details in the next newsletter, and mark December 13th on your calendar!

Members Notes

...by Dave Godfrey

As many ARS chapters struggle with declining membership, and some clubs folding (Peace Arch has recently merged with Fraser South, and Fraser Valley considering disbanding), it is good to know that our NIRS chapter is thriving. We welcomed 5 new memberships to our club in October. *Janice & Bob Lee* of Black Creek along with *Linda & David Ashbaugh*, also of Black Creek, *Pat Gould* of Courtenay, and *Olive Hagar* and *Helen & Joe Stefiuk* from Comox.

Our meeting on October 11th was well attended by 45 members and four guests, including associate members *Susan & Art Lightburn* and *Terry Richmond*, along with MARS member *Don Bridgen* of Port Alberni. As membership chair *Brian Staton* announced, we currently have 33 regular memberships (new and renewals) and 2 associate memberships for 2012. However, we still have 35 regular memberships that have not yet renewed. Time is running out for these folks, as we need to notify ARS head office by December in order to ensure the delivery of the winter edition (January) ARS Journal magazine. We also need to update our members' roster and yearbook before publication in January. So don't forget to either bring your cheque to the next meeting, or mail it to the club address (found at the bottom of page 1 of your yearbook or this newsletter.)

During the meeting, VP *Paul Wurz* informed everyone that arrangements are underway for a return visit of our friends from the Whidbey Island chapter. Tentative dates of May 15 to 17th, 2012 have been planned with a format similar to their visit in 2007. More details will be coming in the early New Year.

For the 'Show & Tell' there was a large showing of fall

fruits and flora in their prime in many members' gardens. The usual suspects (*Harry Wright*, *Bernie Guyader* and *Dick Bonney*) were joined by *Roberts Smith*, *Diana Scott* and *Robert Argall* displaying samples of rhododendrons, cyclamen, magnolia and honeysuckle specimens; all providing wonderful fall colours around the gardens.

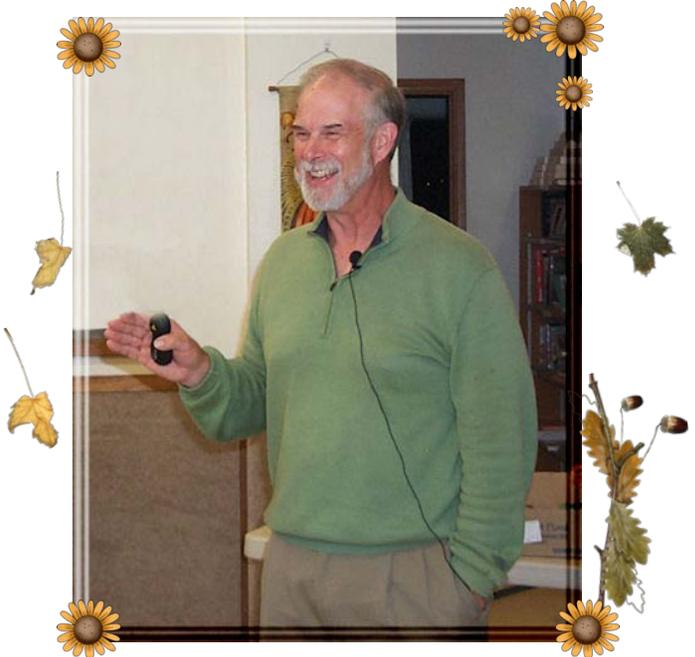
Harry Wright used the education allotted time to announce the winner of his "name the new rhodo" contest. Of all the names submitted, Harry settled on 'Beaufort Gem' as the most appropriate for his new hybrid. Congratulations to *Adela Smith* for submitting the name and she was awarded a potted sample as her prize.



Our program for the evening was "Native deciduous azaleas of North America" presented by *Mr. Mike Stewart*. Mike and Maria were kind enough to take time out from their busy schedule operating their Dover Nursery in Sandy, Oregon, to travel to the island and provide different programs for our chapter, the MARS chapter on the following evening and Nanaimo's chapter on Thursday evening. Mike is a past president of the ARS and a recent gold medal recipient for his work on behalf of the society.

As Mike explained during his colourful presentation, the majority of the 15 deciduous azaleas species of North America are found along the eastern seaboard; all the way from Quebec to Florida. The exception being *Rhododendron occidentale*, commonly known as 'western azalea', the only native azalea that grows naturally west of the Rocky Mountains in the United States. These are located mostly in the mountains of

California and down into northern Mexico.



After Mike's informative presentation, drawings were made for the raffle prizes and the many door prizes. Congratulations to the following: *Barb Staton* winner of 'Yaku Princess' and guest *Don Bridgen* of MARS who won 'R. davidii' as raffle prizes. An added raffle prize of rhododendron 'Lady Alice Fitzwilliam', donated by *Arthur Ralfs*, was won by *Dick Bonney*. *Adela Smith* was the lucky winner of 'Blue Diamond' donated by *Art Lightburn*. A glass wasp trap donated by *Diana Scott* was won by *Jeff Reinhardt*, while *Antje Guertler* won a birch candle, also donated by Diana. Finally, associate member *Terry Richmond* won a pot of English lavender donated by *Dick Bonney*.

Social chair *Louise Casson* thanked the many members who brought delicious goodies for the evening. She then reminded *Maureen Denny*, *Lily Vander horst* and *Isabel Petch* of their offers to provide goodies for the November meeting.

Speaking of the November meeting on the 8th, *Garth Wedemire* will be returning to present Part 2 of his program 'To MARS and Back.' This will be a follow-up to last year's presentation of the exchange trip between the MARS chapter and the PARS (Peace Arch) chapter. Part 2 will feature some of the many beautiful gardens seen in and around the South Surrey area.

As the fall season is drawing to a close, don't forget to bring along some of the bounty from your gardens to share with other members by making a donation to our Revenue table. *Christine Aldred* reminds members to also bring donations for the Christmas Hamper.

On Friday, October 14th, the committee of *Harry Wright*, *Louise Casson* and *Margaret Griffith-Cochrane*

were joined by *Bernie Guyader, Nadine Boudreau* and *Dick Bonney* to plant the many donated rhododendrons and other shrubs in the newly renovated garden boxes at the Comox United church.



Some of the rhododendrons were kindly donated by *Roberts Smith*, while other shrubs were purchased through chapter funds. Thank you folks – these gardens will look fantastic for years to come!



BLUEBERRY BULLETIN

As many members know, Ross and Nancy Munro of Royston House are aficionados when it comes to blueberries having grown them for many years while living on the lower mainland. Ross has given workshops to NIRS members on pruning and propagation of blueberries in the past. He has been kind enough to provide the following report on the success of his many varieties this past summer season.

As with many berries and fruits, the established *Reka* and *Bluecrop* were 1-2 weeks late. *Reka* is taking longer to come to full production; while *Bluecrop* is doing its usual thing trying

to over produce. We had to tie up many of the branches of *Bluecrop* to keep fruit off the ground.

Patriot ripened first - very big and tasty. We replaced our Duke with these as the Duke came down with blight. *Darrow* ripened later in August - nice big tasty fruit.

Chandler didn't start to ripen until early fall but we were eating fresh into October - Huge and delicious so well worth waiting for.

This fall we added a new variety – *Toro*. Customers line up to get these at Circle K u-pick.

Still trying to find some *Draper*

Looking forward to next year, as we are now fenced for deer and netted for birds (thanks Jeff) so getting 100% of our crop for the first time ever.

TIDBITS...

Garden Tour of France, Belgium and Holland Featuring Floriade 2012 World Horticultural Expo

May 29 - June 12, 2012

The tour will commence in France where gardens in Paris, Versailles, Giverny, Dieppe and Vernon will be visited. Next is Belgium with stops in The Imperial City of Bruges and Antwerp, hometown of Rubens. Continue to Holland with a stop in Lieden located near Amsterdam. Travel to Apeldoorn before arriving in Venlo where the "Floriade 2012 World Horticultural Expo" is being held. Tour Information can be found at <http://www.greatexpeditions.com/TourDetail.asp?TourID=EUR002>

Glen and Dorothy Jamieson will be hosting this tour.

Dr. Glen Jamieson Biologist and gardener, Dr. Glen Jamieson is a retired Fisheries and Oceans Canada emeritus scientist, who has a degree in Agriculture from McGill University and a M.Sc. and PhD in Zoology from the University of British Columbia. He is presently Editor of the Journal of the American Rhododendron Society, and with his wife Dorothy, have a half-hectare garden in Parksville, B.C. which has been on regional garden tours. He is particularly interested in species garden plants, has a large tropical rhododendron (*vireya*) collection, and has been growing orchids for 35 years. He has explored for plants in China and Malaysia and has travelled extensively in Europe, the Americas and Asia.



Meconopsis seeds....That lovely blue poppy

Harry has some extra seeds if anyone would like to try their hand at sowing and growing. Just give him a call.



...by Dave Godfrey

As many members now know, our NIRS website experienced some technical problems recently when the main District server crashed, taking down all chapter websites utilizing this domain. Thanks to Garth Wedemire, the problems were soon rectified and our site is once again back in business. All our photo galleries are now up to date with hundreds of pictures of the many activities and events throughout the year. The galleries seem to be a popular feature, as we are well over 1300 visits to the website during the month of October.

The ARS has recently launched itself into the world of social media! They now have a new blog on their website entitled "All About Rhododendrons"

www.rhododendron.org/blog/default.asp

This new feature is designed to act as a public forum for all things rhodos and should provide a nice variety of viewpoints with different levels of information. Recent posts include one on Deciduous Azaleas, and another on Pruning. It is well worth taking a look.



...by Helena Stewart

The story behind why we wear red poppies on our lapels every November 11 is fairly familiar but as usual there are details that are not so well known. According to your intrepid researcher (me), our poppy wearing indeed springs from the WW1 poem "In Flanders Fields." After witnessing the death and burial of his friend, Lt. Alexis Helmer May 2, 1915, Canadian army surgeon Major John McCrae ripped a page out of his notebook and poured out words from his sorrowing heart. Helmer was buried in a small cemetery carved out of the disturbed earth of battlefields north of Ypres that in May are peppered with wild flowers—poppies, bluebells, wild mustard and daisies. But especially poppies.

The red corn poppy (*Papaver rhoeas*), a native in Europe, grows wild and is considered an agricultural weed, albeit a very useful one. Introduced as a medicine by Hippocrates, over the centuries, its seed was gathered as a treatment for insomnia, inflammation, fever, dysentery and as an expectorant in cough syrups. The seeds have

nutritional value as well since they are rich in linoleic acid, oleic acid and unsaturated fatty acids. European bakers have always used poppy seeds liberally in their baking because of the taste and not its reputed narcotic qualities. (While it is true that unripe seeds of the plant contain alkaloids such as morphine and codeine which can be addictive, the ripe seeds used for culinary purposes contain minute amounts, if any at all.)

In myth, the poppy was considered sacred to Hypnos, the Greek god of eternal sleep and legend says that it was considered the flower associated with human sacrifice during the era of the famous Mongol leader Genghis Khan. The red poppy particularly signifies sacrifice dating back as early as the Napoleonic wars when the war-disturbed soil uncovered poppy seeds that grew to blanket the fighting fields in a sea of red.

On May 3, 1915 after the battle of Ypres, a young Canadian sergeant major named Cyril Allinson was delivering mail when he spotted McCrae sitting on the back of an ambulance parked near the dressing station. Major McCrae was hunched over his dispatch book scribbling with a pencil. Years later, Allison recalled: "His face was very tired but calm as he wrote and he looked around from time to time, his eyes straying to Helmer's grave."

After taking his mail, McCrae handed Allinson the poem to read. Moved by what he read, Allinson says it perfectly described the scene that morning—an endless field of red being blown by a gentle east wind. He says it never occurred to him that the poem would ever be published—in fact, it nearly wasn't. Dissatisfied with the poem, McCrae tossed it away but it was rescued by an officer who sent it on to newspapers in England. *The Spectator* rejected it, but *Punch* published it on December 8, 1915.

After the war, people who were moved by the poem decided to wear poppies "to keep the faith" but it was the late Field Marshal Earl Haig who adopted the poppy as the emblem to honour dead servicemen. "In adopting the poppy of Flanders Fields as the Memorial Flower to be worn by all returned soldiers on Armistice Day," said Haig, "we recognize that no emblem so well typifies the fields whereon was fought the greatest war in the history of the world, nor sanctifies so truly the last resting place of our brave dead who remain in France."

Dr. McCrae did not live to see Armistice Day. On January 28, while still commanding Number 3 General Hospital at Boulogne, he died of pneumonia with extensive pneumococcus meningitis. He was buried the following day in the Commonwealth War Graves Commission section of Wimereux Cemetery with full military honours.





In Flanders' Fields



In Flanders' Fields the poppies blow*

Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved, and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders Fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.

If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow



In Flanders' Fields.

**In an autographed copy of the poem, the last word in the first line is "grow" not "blow." The latter has become the accepted version since it more accurately reflects what McCrae saw when he wrote it.*



Fall Colours In The Garden

(Text by Diana Scott with photos by Harry Wright)

Once again the colour in the Valley is spectacular at this time of year – 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.

For stunning reds, *Euonymus alata* (burning bush) puts on a dazzling show in the early fall, and of the many maples *Osakazuki* has to be the stand-out with its brilliant red foliage. A small *Stewartia pseudocamellia* has been a beacon in our yard with its oranges, reds and yellows, and *Fothergilla gardenii* has added burgundy to that colour mix.

Rhodos are very much a part of the fall colour event -- deciduous azaleas are showing reds, yellows, and burgundy foliage; 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 the many 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!



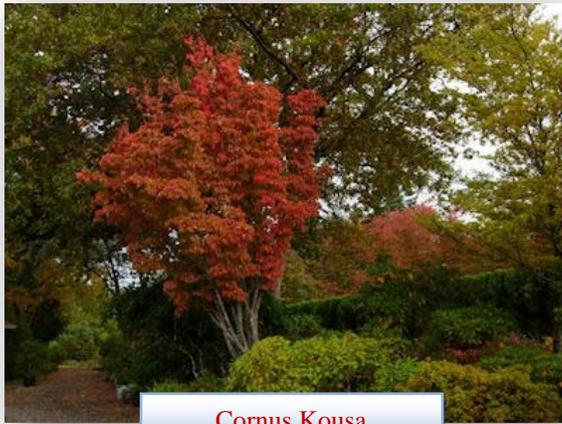
Azalea 'April White'



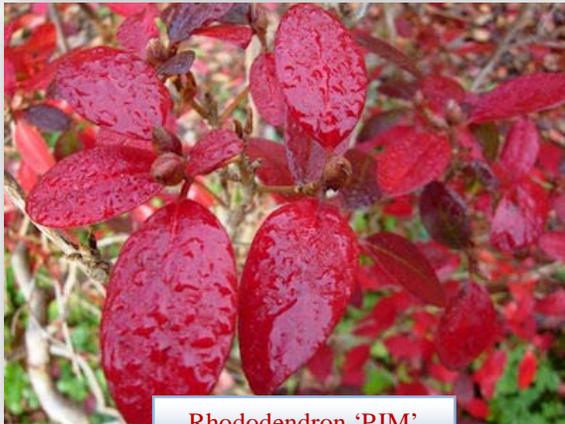
Azalea 'Bright Forecast'



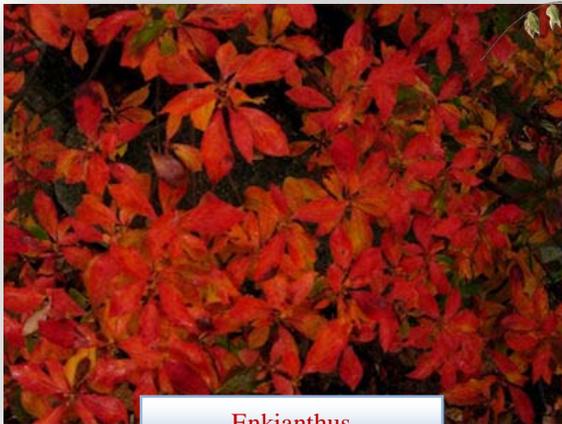
Azalea 'Weston's Pink Diamond'



Cornus Kousa



Rhododendron 'PJM'



Enkianthus



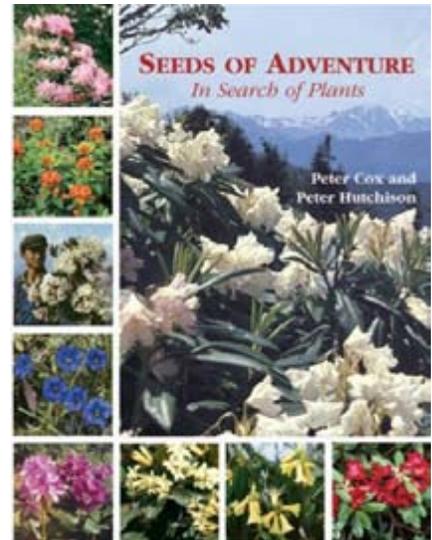
Red Oak

BOOK Corner

BOOK

"Seeds of Adventure"

by Peter Cox and Peter Hutchison
Garden Art Press, The Antique Collectors' Club,
Suffolk, England, copyright 2008.
415 pages, approx. 700 colour photos, and four
pages of coloured maps outlining the various trips of
the adventurers.
Hardbound, ISBN 978-1-870673-58-7



Peter Cox, VMH, was brought up with plant hunting in his blood and with its influences all around him. He is a world authority on rhododendrons, has run the famous Glendoick Nursery near Perth, Scotland, and with his son has written more books on rhododendrons than anyone else. These include *Encyclopedia of Rhododendron Species* and *Cox's Guide to Choosing Rhododendrons*. For his achievements in horticulture, Peter Cox has been awarded the Victoria Medal of Honour, the Gold Medal of the American Rhododendron Society, The Nurseryman and Garden Centre Lifetime achievement award, and awards from the Institute of Horticulture and Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society. In June 2005 he was awarded an honorary doctorate of Science from St Andrews University.

Peter Cox's early life was much influenced by his father, Euan H.M. Cox, a prominent botanist and famous plant collector in the early 1900s. Among his father's colleagues were such famous names as Joseph Rock, Frank Kingdon Ward and Reginald Farrer. Peter was also fortunate to have friends such as H.H. Davidian and Dr. John Cowan at the Royal Botanic Garden.

Sir Peter Hutchison is a keen gardener and plantsman who became the first Chairman of Trustees at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, and was later Chairman of the Forestry Commission. His particular enthusiasms are rare trees and primulas. Both Peters come from the East of Scotland but share a wild garden, Baravalla, in Argyll on the mild western

coast where they grow plants they have collected. Peter Hutchison claims that although he did not grow up surrounded by the famous names of Peter Cox's background, the main influence in his path to a love of gardening and plant collecting came from growing up with a Victorian walled garden. The head gardener was a kindly man who was not in the least disturbed by having a small child tag along after him, watching him do everything in the greenhouses or the vast gardens. Also, his mother was a keen gardener who passed on this enthusiasm to her son. She had a wide knowledge of plants and an instinctive eye for putting them together.

Seeds of Adventure tells the story of the extensive travels made by Peter Cox and Peter Hutchison in search of hardy plants. They describe sixteen journeys – often arduous, sometimes dangerous, and occasionally funny – that resulted in the collection of seeds from plants high in the peaks of the Himalaya, western China, and Turkey. On many of these trips they travelled to places so remote and rough that no western explorers had ever been before to botanize the plants. The two Peters, as a result of their work, introduced many plants, especially rhododendrons, new or lost to cultivation, often saving them from extinction by growing seeds on in the temperate climate of Scotland following their trips, and introducing their finds to Europe, New Zealand, Australia and temperate zones of North America.

After their first trips in 1962 to Turkey and 1965 to India, they suffered a long gap before their next trip in 1981 to China because of many setbacks to their plans caused by political difficulties in so many countries during the intervening years. In 1967 they tried to get back into North-East India without success, and in 1973, they had no success in planning a trip to Bhutan. They received discouraging reports against going into Chile during the 1970s, and nothing came of their attempts to get into Burma (Myanmar). But they never stopped planning, and, turning their focus towards China in 1978 a trip finally came to fruition in 1981. From the year 1981, the trips quickly multiplied and they managed a total of sixteen trips, finally getting to Bhutan in 1988, Tibet in 1998 and Arunachal Pradesh in 2001. The last trip described is to Subansiri, India, in 2002. The organization of the book basically follows one chapter to one trip. It is a very interesting book to read and the pictures are superior.

Margaret Hodgson
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The Yak - October 2011

NO SPRING NOR SUMMER
Beauty HATH
SUCH Grace
AS I HAVE SEEN IN ONE
Autumnal FACE.
— JOHN DONNE



N.I.R.S. Nov 2011

RECIPE REQUESTS

Apple Date Cake *(Diana Scott)*

Cake:

Combine in small bowl:

1 C chopped seeded dates 1 tsp Baking Soda

2 large peeled chopped apples

Add 1 cup boiling water; cover 10 minutes

Beat until fluffy:

½ C butter/marg 1 C sugar

1 egg 1 tsp vanilla

Stir in 1 ½ cups flour to egg mixture; add apple mixture; mix; pour into 8 inch greased cake pan.

350 oven. Bake 40 minutes

(or until centre is cooked) then spread with topping below; bake a further 20 minutes (watch top doesn't burn). Cool.

Topping

In saucepan combine ¼ cup butter/marg with ½ cup firmly packed brown sugar, ½ cup milk and 2/3 cup shredded coconut. Stir over low heat until butter is melted and ingredients combined.



Apple Cake "Tatin" *(Diana Scott)*

Ingredients *(Diana Scott)*

6 Tbsp butter, room temperature 1 3/4 C sugar, divided

1 1/4 apples, peeled and sliced into 12 pieces

2 large eggs, room temp 1/3 C sour cream

1/2 tsp grated lemon zest 1/2 tsp vanilla

1 C plus 2 Tbsp flour 1/2 tsp baking powder

1/4 tsp salt Confectioners' sugar

Directions

Preheat oven 350 F. Grease a 9-inch glass pie dish and arrange apples, cut side down.

Combine 1 C of the sugar and 1/3 C water in a small saucepan cook over high heat until it turns a warm amber color, (caution – keeps cooking; just light amber and take off heat). Swirl the pan but don't stir. Pour evenly over the apple slices.

Meanwhile, cream the 6 tbsp butter and remaining 3/4 C sugar until light and fluffy. Lower the speed and beat in the eggs 1 at a time. Add sour cream, zest, vanilla and mix until combined. Sift together flour, baking powder, salt and with mixer on low speed, add it to the butter mixture. Mix only until combined.

Pour the cake batter evenly over the apple slices and bake for 30 to 40 minutes, until a cake tester comes out clean. Cool for 15 minutes, invert the cake onto a flat plate. If an apple slice sticks, ease it out and replace it in the design on top of the cake. Serve warm or at room temperature, dusted with confectioners' sugar. Serve with whipped cream.

Until Next Month
Noni

