



# The Rhodoteller

[www.nirs.rhodos.ca](http://www.nirs.rhodos.ca)



## JUNE

### North Island Rhododendron Society 2011/2012

**President**

Diana Scott ..... 338-0208

**Vice-President**

Paul Wurz ..... 287-4301

**Secretary**

Pauline Thompson ..... 339-3423

**Treasurer**

Dave Godfrey ..... 335-0717

**Director: Ways & Means**

Nadine Boudreau ..... 339-0909

**Director: Membership**

Brian Staton ..... 337-5228

**Director: Revenue Table**

Chris Aldred ..... 335-3221

**Director: Newsletter/Library**

Noni Godfrey ..... 335-0717

..... 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

### 5th June 2012 - Executive Meeting 2:00 pm

The executive meeting will be held at the home of Nadine Boudreau, 1817 Preston Rd. Comox. Going up on Ryan Road, turn left onto Anderton, right on Greenwood Cres. (turns into Preston Road) Nadine's house is at the very end of Preston.

### 16th June 2012 - Wrap Up Picnic Pot Luck

**Picnic Protocols! The season's finale beckons!**

This year the gathering will be held in the garden of Robert Argall. Drive past the Comox Airport along Knight Road to near the end, then left on Kye Bay Road. Follow around to Wireless Road on the right. The garden is halfway along on the right-hand side. Enter the garden at the second set of wooden gates.

Attendees to this year's gala will have a chance to play again the games Brian and Barb introduced us to last year. New members will be welcomed, old friends embraced - warmly, in both cases. Do wear your name badges. Festive dress would be highly desirable...but any old thing will do.

Members are requested to bring one or more dishes...each suitable for serving several people...of tantalizing appetizers, seductive savories, luxurious breads, crispy salads, succulent fruits, or decadent desserts.

The annual phenomenon of a perfect balance of dishes for all tastes will again be manifest. The picnic committee has requested that members bring their own plates, knives, forks, spoons, etc or whatever is needed to partake of the food. (Only a limited supply of clean gardening trowels is available!) And, your best outside mugs and drinking vessels for the communal tea and coffee, (or your own harmless or otherwise beverages) and please no disposable dishes or cutlery!

**4:00 PM....Please bring your lawnchairs!**

(If you wish to sit anytime during the event)



# Executive



# View

...by Diana Scott



It is always a pleasure to have the City of Courtenay proclaim **May as Rhododendron Month**, and this year was no exception. Our banner was proudly displayed in the Comox Valley Rhododendron Garden which put on a particularly stunning show this spring. Special thanks to Ross Munro for keeping a close watch on the garden and to all who helped out at our various work parties. We look forward to socializing at our weeding and deadheading evenings over the summer!

May was a blur of activities as it is each year. We began with our Rhodo Sale and Truss Display which went very well thanks to our organizer Nadine and her team, our vendors and members who brought in such great plants, and our volunteers who worked so well together and with the public. After the Sale we headed over for the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Bunwich -- a big "THANK YOU" to Bernice who does all the preparation for this wonderful 'late lunch'. It was a fun and relaxing way to end a very busy day.

Our 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Mother's Day Garden Tour was well received by the public and enjoyed by all. Special thanks to our Garden Hosts who opened their beautiful gardens this year: Adrienne and Robert McNabb, Chanchal Cabrera and Thierry Vrain of Innisfree Farm, Mary and Dennis McMahon, Joan and Jack Walsh, Noni and Dave Godfrey, Christine and Phillip Aldred, and Robert Argall. The gardens were a delight and much appreciated by all the Tour goers. Thanks to Christine and Nadine and their team for organizing the Tour, to our Garden Sitters for welcoming the public, and to all who helped out behind the scenes. Bravo!

Gloria and Bernie Guyader graciously opened their garden to us for our AGM on the May 8<sup>th</sup>. Their 'alpine meadows' is particularly beautiful in the spring. It is always a treat to

see Bernie's bonsai collection and to look for those many wee alpine treasures tucked around the garden! Thank you!

Paul Wurz and Frank Fujioka organized the Whidbey Chapter visit mid-May and a whirlwind of tours and socializing kept us hopping! It was great to have the opportunity to host our Whidbey friends and many thanks go to the organizers, the billet hosts, the coffee, lunch and dinner hosts, those who opened their gardens and all who participated. Dave Godfrey has highlighted the events and many 'hosts' in this newsletter under Members' Notes -- in his usual well-written fashion! Once again -- a big 'thank you' to all!

To round out the month, we had our Members' Bus Tour to Saltspring Island this year. Thanks to Pauline Thompson for organizing the day, and to all the Saltspring Island folks who opened their gardens to our club. A great day! May is always our busiest month, but it takes much work throughout the year to make the club as interesting and enjoyable as it is for our members. Many thanks to the Executive who work diligently to organize the various aspects of all our events, and to the members who volunteer their time in so many ways. It's an honour and a pleasure to work with you all! The finale of our season is always our June Pot Luck. This year we will be getting together on June 16<sup>th</sup> at Robert Argall's garden at 387 Wireless Road. Thanks to Robert for offering his garden! We continue with our traditional format, but for those new to the club, look for details here in the newsletter.

As of July our new Executive will be in place for the coming year. I will be taking a Director's role and welcoming Paul as President with Pauline as Vice-President. We are delighted to welcome Ruth Fowler in her new position as club Librarian, and thank Noni for her many years of dedicated work and organization in that role. Thanks to Margaret Griffith-Cochrane who will take over the Hamper program this year from Chris Aldred who has ably headed that successful endeavor over the past many years. Thanks to all in the Executive/Committee team who will continue for another year. Your thoughtfulness

and caring, organizational skills and hard work are truly assets for our club. Thank you. We are a casual and close-knit group. Please don't hesitate to talk with us about ideas and suggestions you might have. If we don't connect over the summer - we look forward to seeing you at our first meeting in September.

## North Island Rhododendron Society Executive and Committee Chairs

2012-2013

### EXECUTIVE OFFICERS:

President: Paul Wurz;  
 Vice Pres/Secretary: Pauline Thompson;  
 Treasurer: Dave Godfrey  
 Past President: Diana Scott

### DIRECTORS:

Nadine Boudreau, Noni Godfrey,  
 Brian Staton, Christine Aldred, Diana Scott

### COMMITTEES:

#### FUNDRAISING

Ways and Means/Raffle: Nadine Boudreau  
 Revenue Table: Christine Aldred  
 Membership: Brian Staton  
 Rhodo Sale: Nadine Boudreau  
 Garden Tour: Diana Scott

#### COMMUNICATIONS

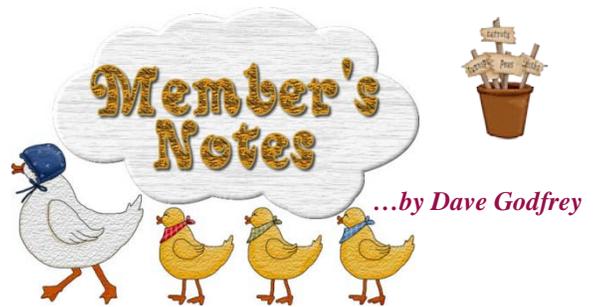
Newsletter: Noni Godfrey  
 Sunshine: Nancy Munro  
 Webmaster: Dave Godfrey  
 Publicity: Helena Stewart  
 Historian: Lois Clyde

#### SOCIAL AND EVENTS

Meeting Refreshments: Louise Casson  
 Rhodo Garden: Ross Munro  
 Facilities: Don Law  
 Christmas Party: Christine Aldred  
 Hamper: Margaret Griffith-Cochrane

#### EDUCATION

Library: Ruth Fowler  
 Program: Diana Scott and Dave Godfrey



On behalf of NIRS members, our 'Sunshine Lady' *Nancy Munro* has sent get well cards to *Bernie Guyader* and *Don Law* for their recent eye surgeries and to *John Vander horst* on his second knee surgery. We hope that all recipients are well on their way to recovery.

As always, "May is Rhododendron Month" and a busy month it has been. We started off with all hands on deck for our annual Sale and Show on Sunday May 6<sup>th</sup>. The response to articles provided in the local newspaper by our PR member, *Helena Stewart*, was terrific from both our members and the public. Once the doors opened at 10 AM, rhodos and companion plants were flying out the exit doors and the cashiers were kept busy for more than an hour before there was an opportunity to take a break.

The resulting sales to our vendors was down slightly over last year, but thanks to the generous donations of our members, the sales at our NIRS companion plant table was the highest ever at \$885. This helped provide us with almost the same amount of income as last year. Thanks to *Nadine Boudreau* and *Diana Scott* for the main organization, and to everyone who participated, with special thanks to those who donated goodies for our morning coffee. Congratulations to *Barbara Steger of Comox* as the winner of the draw for the rhododendron 'Scarlett Wonder'.

Although there were a tremendous number of beautiful trusses provided for this year's display, only 20 ballots were cast for the "People's Choice Award". Rhododendrons 'Clayoquot Warrior', 'Conroy' and 'Haida Gold' were tied for the top favourites this year.



Members of the Nanaimo chapter brought up a display for the ARS Western Region Fall Conference being held in Nanaimo this September. Information was available at the sale, and for those who have not yet done so, early registration is encouraged. For more information visit the conference website at: <http://arsnanaimo2012.ca/> Check out the schedule and print off a registration form. There is a discount for those registering before August 1<sup>st</sup>, and special rates offered at the [Coast Bastion Inn](#).

Following the cleanup of the sale hall, many members enjoyed a relaxing bunwich lunch prepared by our friend **Bernice Morrison**. The gathering is an opportunity to unwind from the bustle of the day's activities, enjoy a beverage and socialize with friends. **Bob & Jo Wright** of the Fraser South chapter and **Alan Campbell** of the Cowichan chapter were visiting the valley and were invited to join us. Bob is in the process of putting the finishing touches to Harry's book on 'Rhododendron Locations in BC', and encourages anyone who has not yet submitted a list of their rhodos to do so soon through his email address [rjwright74@gmail.com](mailto:rjwright74@gmail.com)

At our AGM held on Tuesday, May 8<sup>th</sup> in the garden of **Gloria & Bernie Guyader**, 36 members were in attendance to hear reports from various committees and executive members. **Paul Wurz** was acclaimed as President for the next two years, with **Pauline Thompson** as Vice President. Pauline will also continue to serve as our club's secretary during this period.

Before closing the meeting, draws were made for a door prize of a 'Perennial Honesty' plant (*Lunaria Perennis*) which was won by **Ross Munro**, plus two raffle prizes R. 'Percy Wiseman' won by **Adela Smith**, and R. 'Razorbill' won by **Antje Guertler**.

Comox Valley Rhodo Garden (CVRG) director **Ross Munro** called for a work party on Thursday, May 10<sup>th</sup>. While some members (we included) were super busy preparing our gardens for the Mother's Day garden tour, about a dozen members attended the work party to pull weeds and generally tidy the gardens prior to the tour and the visit from our friends of the Whidbey Island chapter.

Glorious sunshine prevailed on Sunday, May 13<sup>th</sup> for our 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Mother's Day Garden Tour. With close to 200 tickets sold, there was a steady stream of visitors to the seven gardens on this year's tour. The team of **Chris Aldred** and **Dave Godfrey** organized the gardens in the Royston/Union Bay area this year, while publicity chair **Helen Stewart** arranged for tremendous press coverage. Event coordinator **Nadine Boudreau** was kept busy distributing and redistributing tickets, with **Diana Scott** organizing the many gate sitters.

Once again, the success of this year's tour can be attributed to the team of members who helped to organize and run the event so smoothly. Thanks again to NIRS members **Chris Aldred**, **Robert Argall**, **Noni Godfrey** and **Adrienne McNabb**, along with **Mary McMahon**, **Joan Walsh** and **Chantchal Cabrera & Thierry Vrain** of Innisfree Herb Farm, for opening up their beautiful and interesting gardens for the public tour. Financially, with a net profit of over \$2060, this year's fundraiser was about \$150 greater than last year. The lucky winner of the draw for the magnificent rhodo 'Boule de Neige' was **Sharon Scheidl of Comox**. 

With the busy fundraising events behind us, it was time to host our guests from the Whidbey Island chapter. Originally there were 16 members booked to come for the three day visit, but last minute health issues forced two couples to stay home. The eleven other members arrived at the CVRG at 4 PM on Tuesday, May 15<sup>th</sup> and were met by their billets and members of our executive. Following a garden walkabout, everyone attended a 'Meet and Greet' BBQ at the garden of **Becci & Keith Russell** on Lake Trail Road. 



A big thanks to **Ruth Fowler** and **Louise Casson** for organizing all the burgers, hot dogs, salads and chips, along with the purchases of the condiments, and to **Howard Fowler** and son, **Graeme**, for providing the chef duties on Graeme's barbeque. Our Whidbey guests were formally welcomed by our President, **Diana Scott** and each presented with a goodie bag of various items relating to the Comox Valley, including a copy of a DVD PowerPoint presentation showing many NIRS members' gardens.

On Wednesday morning, the Whidbey visitors and NIRS members were invited by **Bryan Zimmerman** to tour his 'Kitty Coleman Woodland Gardens.' Following the hour-long tour of the magnificent grounds, everyone popped around the corner to the garden of **Diana & John Scott** for a tour and a coffee break. Then the convoy of guests and hosts proceeded north to the home of **Paul & Lynn Wurz** and their 'Hidden Acres' garden nursery in Campbell River,

where all were treated to a tour and a wonderful soup and sandwich lunch.



On the return trip, stops were made for tours at the gardens of *Barb & Brian Staton* and *Lois & Jim Clyde* in Black Creek. Upon arriving back in Courtenay, the 11 Whidbey guests and 60 NIRS members enjoyed a potluck dinner hosted by *Roberts & Adela Smith* at their beautiful home and garden. *Jake Ellis* was kind enough to direct parking spaces for the many vehicles, while *Linda and Brad Billings* oversaw the preparation and cooking of the meat for the delicious meal. A big thank you to all who provided such a tremendous variety of food items for the meal. As several commented "There was enough food to feed a small army!" It was all so very tasty, especially the many delicious desserts. Before heading for home on Thursday morning, many took the opportunity for a quick visit to the garden *Peter & Antje Guertler* in Courtenay and *Robert Argall's* garden in Comox. No doubt this whirlwind tour impressed the Whidbey members who attended and will disappoint those who could not attend. Again, an invitation has been extended for NIRS members for a reciprocal tour in the future. We will certainly look forward to this opportunity, as many of us have enjoyed previous tours to Whidbey Island.

In the meantime, 40 members and friends enjoyed a day trip bus tour to gardens on Salt Spring Island. *Pauline Thompson* was kind enough to arrange the tour which departed from Driftwood Mall at 8:15 AM on Thursday, May 24<sup>th</sup>. Although the skies were dull and overcast when we started out, they soon brightened by the time we reached the ferry terminal in Crofton and cleared around noon hour in time for our picnic lunch.

*Sharon Sullivan*, Past President of the Salt Spring Island Garden Club, arranged the gardens to be toured during the day, and helped guide the bus to the various locations. First stop was at the garden of *Ted & Sonja Baker*. Ted is President

of the BC Iris Society and has a lovely demonstration garden of Bearded irises in the field alongside their lengthy driveway. Closer to the house are more specialty Siberian and Pacific Coast irises, along with peonies, Oriental poppies, rhododendrons and other perennials; all providing a glorious array of colour.



It was then on to Sharon's property that included a hike up a very inclined driveway, which many found to be a ten minute workout! Sharon graciously drove several members up the hill that otherwise would not have made it. Once at the mountaintop house, there was a gorgeous vista towards Galliano Island to the east and the San Juan Islands in the south. The warm sunshine provided a perfect setting for us to eat our picnic lunches.

After lunch, it was on to the park-like garden of *Mimi & Roland Beulieu*. There was a cliff-side lookout for beach and ocean viewing, with the garden having 100 year old trees, perennials and roses. The biggest rhodos are original to the now 2.5 acre garden and they dwarf anyone standing near them.



The next two adjacent gardens along Fruitvale Road overlooked the entrance to Ganges Harbour. The 7 acre garden of *Marjit Kristiansen* and *Bill Krebs* was a former daffodil farm and now has almost every planting possible,

including peony beds, daylilies, irises, roses and fruit trees. Next door was the garden of *Philip Hughes* who also had a sunny waterfront garden. A flagstone path led around the house to an old heritage orchard of fruit trees... unfortunately alive with tent caterpillars which were devouring many of the deciduous trees we saw on the island.

Our final stop for the day was at the northern tip of the island at *Fraser's Thimble Nursery and Greenhouses* on Arbutus Road. Enough time was allotted for most on the tour to make a purchase or two (or three or four) of specialty plants not commonly found at other nurseries.

Then it was back to the ferry terminal at Vesuvius Bay for the 20 minute ride back to Crofton. Once there, it was a restful two hour drive back to Courtenay and home. Everyone on the bus gave a round of applause to our secretary, *Pauline Thompson*, for arranging such a wonderful tour, and to our familiar bus driver, *Harvey*, for his expertise in maneuvering the 40 foot bus in some pretty tight areas.

Once the hundreds of photos of all the various May events have been sorted and processed, they will be posted to our NIRS website's photo gallery page.

In addition to several CVRG work parties coming up in the near future, we will also be holding our annual potluck picnic. This year it will be held at the garden of *Robert Argall* on Wireless Road behind the airbase on Saturday, June 16<sup>th</sup> at 4 PM. So no doubt, even more photos to be taken and posted.

As mentioned previously, let's not forget about the ARS Western Region Fall Conference coming up in September. For those members planning to attend, be sure to register early as there will be limits for the banquets and events. For more info, go to their website <http://arsnanaimo2012.ca/> check out the schedule and print off a registration form.

*Diana Scott* is graciously growing on our many small rhodos for future host gifts and is in need of some 2 gallon pots. So if any members have some 2 gallon (or larger) pots to spare, please feel free to give Diana a call.

In closing, members are reminded to notify *Noni Godfrey* if they would like to open their summer garden for NIRS members to tour. Special thanks to *Dick Bonney* who graciously opened his garden on the afternoon of May 10<sup>th</sup> following the latest rhodo garden work party. Other members might wish to do likewise, so be sure to get the word out early.

For now, it is time to take some much needed time off and concentrate on gardening and golfing. So as the old song goes... "See you in September!"



## HYBRIDS OF HAIDA GOLD GARDENS

...by Alan Campbell, Shawnigan Lake, BC  
(Reprinted by permission from the JARS –  
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LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION! To any A.R.S. member fortunate enough to have attended a Chapter meeting offering Harry Wright as the evening speaker, his mantra concerning the cultivation of rhododendrons will be a familiar litany, and location is what epitomizes the excellence of Harry's and Gwen's piece of Eden, Haida Gold Gardens in the town of Courtenay, British Columbia, within Vancouver Island's Comox Valley.

Harry Wright began hybridizing during the late 1980's. His desire was to produce plants that extended the bloom time of yellow flowering rhododendrons. His initial work produced the "Courtenay Royals" or the "Courtenay Five" as they have become collectively known. The first plant named was 'Courtenay King,' an *R. auriculatum* hybrid that had actually been purchased by Harry as the true species. Though showing many characteristics of its seed parent once it bloomed, its claimed birthright was disproven. 'Courtenay Queen' and 'Courtenay Princess' both come from a crossing of 'Haida Gold' X 'Golden Star'. Each plant is a good yellow and bloom a month apart, 'Courtenay Princess' in April followed by 'Courtenay Queen' opening in May with some slight fragrance. 'Courtenay Lady' (Ladybird Group X 'Enchanted Evening') was followed up with 'Courtenay Duke' ('Madame Guillemot' X 'Gomer Waterer'). The "Courtenay" moniker was used once more in the naming of 'Courtenay Gold' ('Haida Gold' X 'Crest'), as Harry strived again for a stronger yellow.

Mount Washington on Vancouver Island is a world renowned skiing destination which at a mile (1.6 km) high is a prominent feature overlooking the town of Courtenay. To the southwest looms another peak, Mount Albert Edward, a cherished goal for seasoned hikers and climbers. Lying between these two spectacular crags is the Forbidden Plateau, a year round family playground for winter sports, summer camping, and naturalists interested in the sub-alpine. A number of stories in legend and lore venture to explain how Forbidden Plateau came by its name, but I'll recount the one that has most relevance to this article.

Much like the Highland Scottish clans of old, the diverse native tribes of the Coast Salish First Nation were well known to battle each other when not united against some foreign invader. The K'omoks tribe of the Comox Valley, as legend has it, was forewarned of an approaching raiding party of the Southern Qu'wut'sun (Cowichan) tribe. Armed with this knowledge, the K'omoks sent their women and children

up into the high country to be safely hidden. At the end of hostilities and after safety had returned, the men of the tribe climbed to the plateau to bring their families back home. In spite of a long and exhaustive search of the various meadows and along the many streams and lakeshores, no sign of the women and children could be found. They had disappeared! The search continued until the first snows of winter began to fall and as the white silence settled on the plateau, it began to turn pink. The men returned from the plateau and forever after called it an evil and forbidden place.

It was Harry's interest in local First Nation's lore that provided the name for his hybrid of 'Courtenay Queen' X R. fortunei. A compact plant that first bloomed as a six-year-old



opening white, a somewhat disappointed Harry passed it by, only to come upon the plant again a week later to see that it had turned a blushed pink. 'Forbidden Plateau' it thus became.

A fourth hybrid coming out of the 'Haida Gold X 'Golden Star' crossing was given the name 'Paradise Meadows', after an area located at the north end of Forbidden Plateau below the slope of Mount Washington. After eighteen years of evaluation, this plant has grown to only three feet (0.9 m) high by two and a half feet (0.8 m) wide. 'Paradise Meadows' further differs from its siblings in that the yellow



flowers are tinged amber on the outside and bloom in early May between 'Courtenay Princess' and 'Courtenay Queen'.

In the spring of 2011, Harry proposed to the members of the North Island Chapter a "Name that rhodo" contest, as he had concluded his evaluation of a new hybrid and was in need of a suitable name. The only provisions were that the name again commemorate a feature of the Comox Valley and allude to the diminutive nature of the hybrid plant. Chapter member Adela Smith submitted the winning name and gratefully accepted as her reward a rooted cutting of the hybrid, newly named



'Beaufort Gem' (R. argyrophyllum var. nankingense 'Chinese Silver' X 'Pygmy'). The Beaufort Mountain Range is to the southwest of the Comox Valley.

Harry's dedicating the names of his hybrids to local geographical features took a back seat to adoration and

respect when naming his next three plants. Taking pollen from his own 'Courtenay Queen' and placing it onto 'Ring of Fire' has produced an exceptional plant of fine bearing and colouration, as one would expect from such a crossing. Harry chose to name this lovely plant after his wife of 55 years, Gwendolyn Wright.



The 'Haida Gold' X 'Golden Star' seedlings produced yet another selection now named 'Iona Cee', named for Iona Campagnola, the



Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia from 2001 to 2007. 'Iona Cee' is similar to her sister seedlings but blooms a month later in mid-June. In the naming of the third plant (R. fortunei X R. decorum) X R.

decorum ssp. diaprepes 'Gargantua' in honour of the Queen Mother, Harry needed to receive Royal permission. The name needed to reflect the royal personage as well as being unique to the genus Rhododendron. 'Queen Empress' was mutually agreed upon. When King George VI ascended the



British throne, his wife Elizabeth became Queen Consort along with numerous other titles from throughout the commonwealth, one of which was the Queen Empress of India.

Being personally familiar with Haida Gold Gardens, I am aware that there are more, as yet unnamed, hybrids still under evaluation growing in the test field outside the garden proper. Hopefully someone will continue these evaluations as sadly on November 3, 2011, Harry Wright heard the owl call his name. Many rhododendron growers will now never have the good fortune to come to know the man who produced many of the garden plants we now enjoy, the hybrids of Haida Gold Gardens.

Please allow me to pass the pen now to Harry and have him share a last little calyx of rhodo wisdom... "If you find a rhododendron becoming somewhat unruly within its allotted space, grab your secateurs and just give it a little attitude adjustment."

(All photos from the Harry Wright Collection)



# HYBRIDS

## A Washington Connection

Part 2

...by Diana Scott

One of the many interesting articles available through the ARS website was written by Gwen Bell on Washington State Hybridizers. As my interest in rhodos continues to grow, I'm becoming more 'tuned', not only to the qualities of rhodos I particularly like, but to the hybridizers who have created them. Wandering through our garden, I'm delighted to note that I remember for some rhodos, not only their names, but who hybridized them. A small thing – but kind of fun!

Over the past few years North Island has alternated visits with our sister Chapter from Whidbey Island in Washington State. It has been a pleasure to get to know these fellow rhodo enthusiasts as we admire members' gardens and share a glass of wine at barbeques and pot-lucks. Two of these Whidbey members have also hybridized rhodos – some of which are available commercially and through specialty nurseries.

Although Bill and Mary Stipe were unable to make the trek to North Island this year, we have been hosted by them at Glynneden Gardens in Greenbank Washington on a number of occasions. Their nursery and garden is a testament to the many beautiful rhodos that have been locally hybridized – as well as a display of other rhodos, rare species, trees, shrubs and perennials from farther afield. Bill has been an active member of the Seattle and Whidbey chapters, an ARS Director and speaker, the director of Meerkerk Gardens, has collected and grown seed from several trips to China, and been involved with the Northwest Hybridizers Association. A number of years ago Bill shared some of his wealth of knowledge and experience with us, presenting 'Rhodo Basics 101' to our members.

Bill has hybridized and named a number of rhododendrons, many of which are featured on the Hirsutum website (<http://www.hirsutum.info/>). **Amiblue** (R. ponticum x 'Whidbey Island') is an early-midseason bloomer which forms a dense 5 foot shrub in 10 years. I wonder at the name – is it 'Ami-blue' or 'Am I Blue?'; even Bill admits that for a 'blue' name it is more of a purple rhodo! The dome-shaped truss is strong purple in bud opening to a lighter purple/violet. Amiblue has been propagated by Dover Nursery and is available through a number of outlets.

**Two Thumbs Up** ('Lem's Cameo' x 'Sierra del Oro') is a beautiful midseason rhodo with trusses that display the charm of Lem's Cameo's wavy pink-edged lobes and red dorsal blotch with a strong touch of Sierra del Oro's gold at the throat.

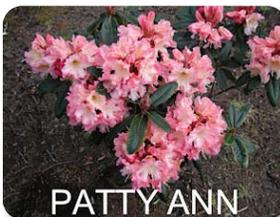


This plant grows about 3 feet in 10 years and is available at Glynneden Gardens.

**Creamcicle** ('Brandt's Tropicana' x 'Apricot Fantasy') is a beautiful rhodo, aptly named for its creamy-orange blooms with a slight orange striping into a dark pink/orange freckly blotch. This freckled blotch is mirrored in a double calyx which gives it an added 'wow' factor!



Other rhodos hybridized by Bill include **Valarie Jane** ('Unknown Warrior' x 'Whitney Purple'); **Leslie Belle** ('Purple Splendour' x 'One Thousand Butterflies'); **Just Dandy** ('Nancy Evans' (s) X 'Crest'); **Patty Ann**, **Sandra Ann Stipe**, **Karen Gervais Beauty**, **Axelina**, and **Johnsy**. Bill's rhodos may be available at various outlets,



and through Bill at Glynneden Gardens. All of the rhodos have been registered with the IRRC (International Rhododendron Register and Checklist) which is the official record maintained by the Royal Horticultural Society in England.



It was a pleasure to have renowned plantsman and hybridizer Frank Fujioka of Whidbey Island with us as part of the Whidbey Chapter contingent in May. Paul kept him on his toes ('What's that one, Frank?') as we toured a number of beautiful gardens in our area! Frank's hybrids are somewhat more readily available as a number are in commercial production.

A variety of Frank's hybrids can be found in our North Island gardens. A favorite of many, his rhodo **Elsie Watson** ('Anna' x 'Purple Lace') was named after the great plantswoman and founder of the ARS's Northwest Hybridizer's Group who influenced many of the contemporary hybridizers. Elsie's goals were to develop early blooming plants like 'Tabitha' (named after one of her cats), azure-violet rhodos like 'Blue Boy', plants with dramatic foliage like sister seedlings 'Pink Prelude' and 'Chief Sealth', and rhodos with picotee flowers like 'Marley Hedges'. Frank's purple picotee-flowered Elsie Watson is a wonderful tribute, and always a show-stopper in the garden!

Like many of the hybridizers, Frank takes many, many years of trials before bringing one of his creations to the market. He has an artist's eye, and has developed rhodos with excellent growth habit, great foliage, with beautiful and somewhat unusual blooms. The early star-like flowers of **Starbright**



**Champagne** (Yaku Sunrise x Hansel' x 'Lem's Cameo'), 'champagne'-coloured with a dark purple throat, always receive appreciative comments!

**Seaview Sunset** ('Nancy Evans' x 'Canadian Sunset') is another of Frank's plants seen in many of our gardens. This eye-catching rhodo grows to about 3 feet and has blooms of reddish-orange flowing to pinkish-yellow in the throat.



In the same size group, **Silver Skies** (degronianum ssp yakushimanum 'Koichiro Wada' x Medusa) is an early bloomer with beautiful dark green foliage with creamy indumentum, and pale cream-pink blooms edged with darker pink.



**Primary Pink** ([Yaku Sunrise x (C.I.S. x Jingle Bells)] x Lem's Cameo) also grows in the 2-3 foot range with delicate pink dome-shaped trusses that just make one think 'sweet'! The foliage has slight indumentum

on a compact, rounded plant. One of Frank's more vibrantly coloured rhodos is, of course,

**Vibrant Violet** (impeditum x augustinii 'Tower Court') which is an early bloomer with vivid violet frilly-lobed flowers sporting brownish-orange anthers. A stunner in the spring!



Some of the many other hybrids that Frank has created include: **Cranberry Lace, Glowing Gold, Louisa Wittrock, Midnight Mystique, Miss Frances, Opal Luster, Pink Pinwheels, Pomegranate Splash, Purple Amethyst, Saffron Silk, Burgundy Lace, Chemainus, Golden Pleasure, Jim's Blueberry Jam, Magenta Medley, Nancy Evens x Crest x Macabeanum, Nancy Evans x pachysanthum, Orchid Bouquet,** and **Spring Fragrance**. Check out their photos on the Hirsutum website!

A number of Frank's hybrids are available commercially, and some are available through our local growers, notably Paul Wurz at Hidden Acres.

It's such a pleasure to have rhodos in our gardens, and it is even more delightful to know where they came from and who had a 'hand' in creating them. Congratulations to our Washington hybridizers for the beauty that they have added to our gardens!

*(All photos from Bill Stipe, Frank Fujioka or Hirsutum web site)*



## EDITOR'S NOTE

This is the last issue of The North Island Rhododendron Society's Newsletter, The Rhodoteller, until September. I'd like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a pleasant and fruitful summer! A little rest from the computer is in order, however there is still time to enjoy and work in the garden, and of course the odd golf game. So I will leave you once again with this last verse or garden proverb:

The kiss of the sun for pardon  
 The song of the birds for mirth  
 One is nearer God's heart in a garden  
 Than anywhere else on earth

