



The Rhodoteller

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March

North Island Rhododendron Society

2011/2012 Executive

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Director: Ways & Means

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Chris Aldred335-3221

Director: Newsletter/Library

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..... nonigod@shaw.ca

Social Committee:

Louise Casson334-2331

Publicity:

Helena Stewart339-1733

Sunshine Lady:

Nancy Munro334-3719

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

COMING EVENTS

6th March 2012 - Executive Meeting 2.00 pm

The executive meeting will be held at the home of Chris and Phil Aldred, 4769 Kilmarnock Drive, Courtenay, BC.

Drive south on old Island Highway, turn left onto Spindrift (about 1 Km South of Kingfisher). Right onto Kilmarnock, Chris is on the right hand side.

13th March 2012 - Regular Monthly Meeting

Our Trip to China....Part 1

Join us on Tuesday evening for a presentation by Nanaimo Rhododendron Society members Art and Susan Lightburn. The Lightburns, both retired, have spent their adult life in coastal BC and the lower mainland, raising their family on Queen Charlotte Island and Vancouver Island. Art developed an interest in rhododendrons about 10 years ago. Since then he has created a series of rhodo beds on his Nanoose property, concentrating on his species. Their PowerPoint presentation of their recent trip to China showcases some of Susan's brilliant photography and is sure to provide a fascinating glimpse into life in this distant part of the world. You are welcome to tag along on their journey to seek out rhododendrons in their native habitat.

EXECUTIVE VIEW

...by Diana Scott

March is a great time to be in the garden! The early rhodos are coming into their own, providing punches of colour from the fresh whites of dwarfs like Snow Lady to the show-stopping reds of larger plants such as Peter Faulk. This would be a great time to invite members to your garden to highlight your early rhodos - and for members to visit our local growers to get even more inspiration.

Our selected plant this month is the hybrid 'Maricee' from the species *R. sargentianum*, donated by Ken Webb and grown on by the club. The Rhodo Species Botanical Garden website describes *R. sargentianum* as: 'Densely-branched, dwarf evergreen shrubs with small and scaly, fragrant leaves. The small daphne-like flowers (mid- to late spring) are pale yellow to cream in clusters of 5 to 12. A choice, floriferous dwarf species for the rock garden or other sunny locations. Requires excellent drainage and is relatively slow growing and difficult to propagate. Native only to central Sichuan where it occurs from 10,000 to 14,000 ft. on cliffs and rocks. Has not been collected in the wild since 1904!' Information from other sites suggests that *R. sargentianum* likes a lean soil mix and may perform better at a higher pH than most rhododendrons. When happy, it is reported to flower freely and frequently receives awards on the West Coast. One site indicates that although it likes to be in sunny spots, it dislikes high summer heat -- which will be something to consider when choosing a planting location.



HAPPY
ST. PATRICK'S
DAY!

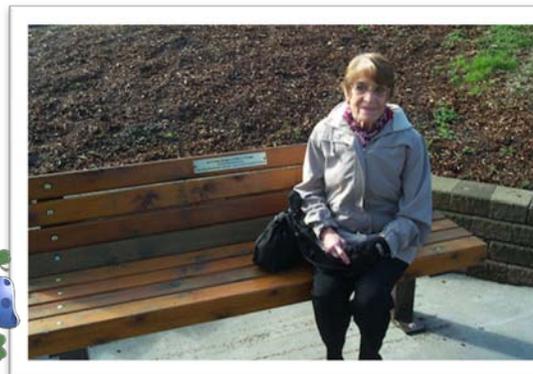
N.I.R.S. Mar 2012

The plant that we have is a hybrid by James and Elizabeth Caperci of Seattle Washington. It is a sargentianum form - seed parent x pollen parent. It has slightly longer leaves and larger florets than the species, and has creamy-white tubular, funnel-shaped flowers held in miniature trusses. It will likely grow in the 2' range. We are fortunate to be able to offer such an interesting and rare plant to one of our members or guests at the March meeting!

GOOSEBERRIES NOTES

...by Dave Godfrey

Valentine's Day on February 14th was a day filled with love and hearts, as about two dozen NIRS members, family and friends gathered at the Comox Valley Rhododendron Garden for the dedication of the bench in remembrance of our founder, Harry Wright.



Harry's loving wife of 53 years, Gwen Wright, welcomed everyone and said a few words about Harry's garden interests and his dream someday of having a bench to relax on while enjoying the beauty of the rhododendrons. Two City of Courtenay crew workers then attached the plaque to the bench situated alongside the new BOVI (Born on Vancouver Island) bed. Three of Harry's mature hybrid rhodos have already been relocated to the expanded bed, with more to follow in the early spring.



Afterwards many in attendance then joined Gwen for coffee at the Airpark Cafe. In all, it was a great opportunity to socialize and remember a dear friend.

That same evening saw 42 members and 4 guests attend our regular monthly meeting at the Comox United church hall. During the meeting, social committee chair, *Louise Casson* explained that she has a new commitment that prevents her from arriving at the hall in time to have coffee and tea made before the meetings. Therefore, she is seeking the assistance of another member willing to take on this chore. Anyone able to do so should contact Louise as soon as possible.

Newcomer *Marilyn Metruk* of Royston was welcomed as our newest member, bringing our total membership to 60 regular and 6 associate members. Our new 2012 yearbooks were handed out to those members attending, and for those unable to make the meetings we will be mailing them in the near future.

Dick Bonney led off the Show & Tell portion of the meeting, with a beautiful array of hellebores, skimmia, cyclamen and witch-hazel from his garden. *Brian Staton* brought a sample of his 10 ft. tall R. 'Olive' which has been flowering since the end of January. *Judy Walker* and *Jill Gould* brought forward suggested garden tips, including using flattened wine corks as plant pot legs..... me thinks there needs to be much more wine consumed over the next few months! *Noni Godfrey* showed off her mini bouquet of colour (snowdrops, winter aconites and cyclamen) which are all beginning to add colour to the winter gardens.

Following the meeting, acting chair *Pauline Thompson* gave a short PowerPoint educational on "Sick Rhodos" and how to avoid problems. This led into the program for the evening, our annual Gardening Panel – this year consisting of *Arthur Ralfs*, *Judy Walker* and *Robert Argall*. Each gave a brief presentation on a topic of their interests – Arthur on growing garlic and the disease "White Rot"; Judy on her year-round veggie gardens, and Robert on Winter Gardens. Each topic brought questions from the floor and was then followed by questions of concerns from the audience. The program was concluded with a colourful two minute show of time lapsed photography of flowers opening their blooms – all in all, another interesting and informative meeting enjoyed by all those in attendance.



Winners were drawn for the various raffle and door prizes. Congratulations to *Ron Cameron* winner of the raffle prize R. 'Cilpinense', and *Dick Bonney* winner of R. 'Yaku Princess'. While *Helena Stewart* won the door prize package of lavender sachets (kindly donated by Dick) and *Nadine Boudreau* won a container of beautiful *potpourri*.

Dick Bonney wanted me to pass along that he has hired an energetic helper, Annie Handley of Comox, for garden work 4 hours per week. Ms. Handley is seeking other garden work opportunities. So if any other members find they need extra help with their gardens, Dick would more than willing to pass along her contact information.

Chris Aldred thanks all those members who have been supporting the revenue table throughout the year. In addition for a request to bring items to the meetings, she also reminds members to pot up any companion plants for our annual sale in May. As many know, our companion plant table at the sale brings in 100% profit to the club, and helps fund various activities throughout the year. This is only made possible through the generosity of our members.

Speaking of funds, it occurs to me that many members, especially those new to the club, probably wonder where our membership fees go. Therefore, I thought I should provide the following breakdown:

NIRS Annual Membership Fee = \$35.00

ARS dues -\$30.00 USD

District One levy -\$ 2.50

BC Council of Garden Clubs (BCCGC) Insurance -\$ 1.00

Balance (net income to NIRS) = \$ 1.50

Of course, as you can well realize, this is only the situation when the Canadian dollar is on par with the American dollar. Most years, if the dollar is below par then the remaining \$1.50 is quickly eaten up, and then some, with the exchange. The annual membership dues have been held at \$35 for the past decade or more, and when necessary have been subsidized with other club revenues.

Our May Rhodo Sale & Show plus Mother's Day Garden Tour are vital fundraisers for our chapter each year. The full support of our membership is the only way to ensure their success. As we make plans for these events, please consider your support in any way that you can. I still have a small supply of half-gallon pots for any members willing to pot-up donations for our sale. Just give me a call or send an email before the meeting and I'll bring them along.

It is not too early to be thinking about entering some photos in the upcoming ARS Fall Western Regional Conference photo contest. Full contest details were included in our February Rhodoteller. So start preparing for a full summer of snapshot taking by dusting off your lenses, right now.

It's not too late to have your collection of rhododendrons included in the next issue of 'Rhododendron Varieties and



Locations in BC. Harry's booklet is being prepared for a reissue by Bob Wright of Lions Bay. You can contact Bob or send your list of rhodos to him at rjwright74@gmail.com

The chapter has recently renewed its annual associate membership to the Rhododendron Species Foundation and Botanical Garden (RSF). We have also received their 'Rhododendron Species' 2012 yearbook which is available to members through the club's library. Any NIRS members visiting the Federal Way, WA (Tacoma) area can receive free admission to the RSF Garden by simply showing the NIRS membership card or mentioning your membership.

Once again, we get to turn the clocks forward an hour on March 11th then spring arrives ten days later. So busy times ahead for many of our members. Be sure to attend our March 13th meeting as associate members Susan & Art Lightburn present the first of their two-part program... "Our Trip to China and Tibet." The only way many of us will see rhododendrons in their native habitat will be through the eyes and lenses of these adventurous members.

St. Patrick's Day Quiz

...by Helena Stewart

For gardeners, March means daffodils, crocuses and the first official day of spring but for the Irish (and those Irish at heart) the only reason for March to exist (*faith 'n begorra!*) is St. Patrick's Day. To test how Irish you really are, here's a mini-quiz to see what you know about the Day for Wearin' of the Green:

- 1) St. Patrick was born in: a) Kilkenny, Ireland b) Wales c) Ballymena, Ulster, or d) Dumbarton, Scotland.
- 2) St. Patrick is known for driving *what* out of Ireland: a) toads b) snakes c) lizards, or d) the Loch Ness monster.
- 3) The shamrock is Ireland's official symbol, true or false?
- 4) A leprechaun is really an Irish: a) midget b) thief c) shoemaker, or d) magician.
- 5) Everyone has heard about kissing the Blarney Stone, but if you do you get: a) moist lips since there's always dew on the rock b) good luck in love c) it removes shyness by giving you the gift of the gab, or d) heals your warts.
- 6) What is a *shillelagh*: a) just a big stick b) an Irish ballad c) Celtic spelling for the female name

"Sheila", d) a musical instrument, or e) none of the above.

- 7) Which Irish author did NOT win a Nobel Prize for literature: a) James Joyce b) William Butler Yeats c) George Bernard Shaw d) Samuel Beckett or e) Seamus Heaney.
- 8) St. Patrick's Day became a national holiday in Ireland in: a) 1347 b) 1903 c) 879, or d) 1845.
- 9) How many pints of Guinness will be consumed on St. Patrick's Day? a) a million b) 575,000 c) 843,000 or d) 13 million.
- 10) St. Patrick was a name the saint took when he became a missionary. His real name was: a) Angus McGregor b) Miles Shallob c) Marcus Aurellius or d) Maewyn Succat.

Cyclamen Companions

...by Frances Burns of Eugene Chapter

What more could one want in a genus than one that is renowned because, although it is small, there are species which flower in every month of the year. It is the only genus thus endowed: the Cyclamen, which even without flowers would still rank as a foliage plant.

Listed in order of hardiness are:

Cyclamen purpurascens blossoms rose-purple and fragrant in summer.

C. hederifolium blooms bountifully in fall.

C. coum, in magenta, pink or white, blooms all winter.

C. pseudibericum blooms pink or white in the spring.

C. trochopteranthum, *mirabile*, *parvifolium*, the honey-scented *cilicium*, and the miniature *intaminatum* are all hardy.

Hardy only to Zone 7 are *Cyclamen repandum*, *libanoticum*, *graecum*, and the dainty *balericum* and *creticum*.

Less hardy, to 26 deg. F, are *Cyclamen africanum*, *rohlfianum*, *persicum*, *somalense*, and *cypricum*.



For information on Cyclamen culture, go to the website cyclamen.org – they are an enchanting genus and make excellent companion plants in the rhododendron garden.

Head Starts: Starting From Seed

...by Noni Godfrey

As the temperatures begin to moderate outside and the daylight grows longer, the average gardener is anxious to get back to their favourite pastime. During the winter months, some gardeners spend many hours poring over seed catalogues and sketching out a garden layout before ordering or purchasing their seed packets.

Now is the ideal time to get a jump on spring by planting seeds indoors to give them a head start for the growing season outside. If it's already warm outside, you can sow seeds directly into rows in the ground. Root vegetables such as radishes, beets and carrots, don't like to have their roots disturbed and grow better if sown directly into the garden. While other vegetables such as tomatoes, peppers, leeks and cabbage, tolerate transplanting well and would benefit from an early start.

If you decide to start your seeds indoors, here are some suggestions to make your seed starting more successful. First, be sure to only use a sterile soil mix, often called 'germinating soil' or 'seed starter soil', as this will eliminate insects and disease being brought indoors. To ensure young seedlings won't succumb to a fungus disease called "damping off", caused by too much humidity and poor air circulation, treat the soil at the time of planting with a liquid fungicide called 'No-Damp' found in most nurseries or garden centres.

For some plants, such as tomatoes, peppers and cucumbers, it is easy to start the seeds in Jiffy Peat Pellets. Each pellet when soaked in water overnight expands to seven times the dry size, and becomes a small growing sack with peat soil large enough for sowing two or three seeds. The advantage of using peat pellets is that you can plant the seedlings right into the garden in spring without disturbing the roots.

Place the growing media into a commercial seed flat, paper cups, milk cartons or even aluminum cake pans, as long as you poke tiny drainage holes in the bottom before filling. A good rule of thumb is to plant seeds to depths that are twice their diameter. Seed planting depths are usually indicated on the back of the seed package. Place your seed containers in a tray of warm water and let the water absorb upward through the holes in the bottom. By watering this way, you don't risk disturbing the seeds. It is also important to remember to water with warm water as cold water will chill a seedling and slow its growth. Always water your seedlings from the bottom as top spraying could destroy their small root system.

Once your seeds are planted, be sure to place name tags in the containers to know which are which. Then place the trays in a warm, sunny location to begin the germination process. Commercial heat mats help to promote seed growth, as they provide warmth from below and usually come with a clear plastic humidity cover. Some growers place seed trays under fluorescent lights to promote growth in a few weeks.

The first leaves to appear are called cotyledons or 'seed leaves'. Once the seedlings have three or four 'true' leaves that grow after the seed leaves emerge, they are ready to be transplanted. Harden them off first by putting them outdoors in the sun for an hour or two each day and gradually increase the time outdoors. It is best to transplant seedlings on an overcast day or early in the morning to prevent shock.

Water the seedlings before removing them from the container and keep the roots as undisturbed as possible. It is best to plant the seedlings to a depth of their first 'true' leaves. Tomato plants can be planted quite a bit deeper as they will form roots from the stem.

Be sure to follow the growing information found on the seed package. If you start too early the plants will become tall, leggy and root bound before they can be planted in the garden. Other seeds if planted too late will have a lot of catching up to do in the garden. Remember that perennials started from seed usually don't bloom until their second season.

(Compiled from various articles found on the internet.)

Nothing Grows Here

...by Jill Gould

My mother was a good seat-of-the-pants gardener. My father, on the other hand, did not know a rose from a cabbage, and what's more, did not care. Mowing lawns was his job, done under duress. One day he came home with a wonderful invention: a gas lawnmower. He showed my younger brothers how to run it—they were intrigued—and from that day forth, it was their job. My job on the other hand was to weed. Still not my favourite task, but I did learn how to tell shepherd's purse from pansy seedlings. I must have fortunately inherited my mother's gardening genes, not my father's, and have spent a lifetime learning how to garden.

My mother's mandate was to feed The Tribe (four kids). On gravelly soil (a glacial esker) she dug in cow and chicken manure, and managed to raise runner beans,

carrots, peas, radishes, cucumbers and whatever else she could coax into growing. Manure was pretty well free, fortunately, as we lived near a farming area.

When, in my mid-twenties, I left my job in the Big Smoke to work in a North Coast logging camp, I ran into an environment where, if you couldn't log it, it didn't matter. In the camp where I found myself, nobody had a garden, with the exception of the bull bucker (faller's foreman), but he was a New Zealander, so was allowed to be a bit different. I ended up renting a small mobile home which was right next to the beach; pretty gravelly soil, but I was used to that. What we did not have was manure! Unless you wanted to go out with a bucket and scoop up deer berries. I avoided doing this, as everyone already thought I was weird, first by being a single woman in a logging camp, and secondly, by wanting to grow a garden. "Nothing grows here," I was told time and time again.

Now granted, it did know how to rain there. The rain we got made the Comox Valley look like Palm Desert. Two hundred inches a year was not uncommon, and when it rained, it could rain for the Biblical forty days and forty nights. We made jokes about Noah and his Ark being due at any time. The factor which no one considered to be a benefit was the mildness of the climate. We were right at sea level, and it rarely snowed. So, I reasoned... why not plant the back yard in vegetables?

As I started digging a vegetable bed, aided by a friend's ten-year-old and a couple of off-duty loggers, people stuck their heads over the fence and told me, "Nothing will grow here". They could not tell me why, except to point out other yards, devoid of any flowers, vegetables, shrubs, or even grass. "See?" they said. "Nothing grows here." But I persisted. I planted some tulip bulbs along the fence in a sunny spot. My large shaggy white dog lay on them, and squashed them flat. It was unfortunately the warmest place in the yard, and she loved it. I planted pansy seeds, and just as they were growing well, they were "weeded" out by my then boyfriend. (I married him anyway.) I planted parsley, which an old relative once assured me would never grow in a family where the woman wore the pants. Despite my blue jeans, I had a bumper crop, but couldn't give it away because none of my neighbours knew what to do with it. I grew carrots and onions, albeit rather spindly in the poor soil.

At that time, I was only dimly aware of the merits of seaweed, but heck, the beach was right there. I did order bags of "steer manure" to be brought in by the camp boat. The second year, the crops were a bit better. I grew peas—finally. I discovered the secret: no matter what they tell you about peas being a "cool weather" crop, you had to wait for the rains to lessen in May

before you tried to plant anything. Otherwise seeds just rotted. It was impossible to get a jump on the season. I never did succeed with cucumbers.

My greatest triumph was displaying some (admittedly small) potatoes to some of my co-workers. "You grew those here?" they cried. "But nothing grows here!"

Quiz Answers

- 1) Either b) or d). Historians know that the Saint was born in `western Britain` but aren't sure if it was Scotland or Wales. He was abducted when he was 16 by Irish raiders and taken to Ireland where he was sold as a slave to a sheep farmer. At 22 he escaped, returned to Britain and spent 12 years in a monastery. He returned to Ireland as a missionary in 430AD.
- 2) A trick question. It's actually a) and b). In truth, there have never been snakes in Ireland because of climate and habitat and maybe the icy waters around the island. Scholars suggest that the myth of chasing out the snakes arose because St. Patrick banished paganism and the old Druids used the serpent as a symbol. As for the toads, Norsemen believed that St. Patrick's name meant ``expeller of toads.``
- 3) Another trick question. The shamrock is the ``unofficial symbol`` like the Celtic cross and the knot. The actual symbol is the Celtic harp (*clairseach*), heraldic harp or Gaelic harp and this has been inseparable from Irish culture for centuries. Ireland is the only country in the world to have a musical symbol as its official symbol.
- 4) c) They are shoemakers principally for elves but they will only make one shoe per elf, not a pair. The leprechaun will also lead you to his pot of gold if you remember to stare him right in the eye without blinking. Take your eye off him for even a second and he'll vanish. Also the traditional leprechaun colour was red, not green. There's a legend on how leprechauns became shoemakers but too long to include here.
- 5) c) The Blarney Stone is built into the battlements of Blarney Castle, County Cork and promises `great eloquence` and skill at flattery to anyone who kisses the stone. To kiss it, you lie on your back so that your head is partially leaning over the battlements, hold on to the iron rails and pucker up—not easy! There are several explanations for the Blarney Stone (or Stone of Eloquence) but the most popular is that it was brought to Ireland by the prophet Jeremiah and used as an oracular throne for Irish kings—a king of Harry Potter's "Sorting Hat" for kings. Legend says that it was taken to Scotland to serve as the prophetic power of royal succession, a Stone of Destiny but when Cormac McCarthy, King of Munster, brought 5,000 men to support Robert the Bruce to defeat the English in 1314 the Scots expressed their

gratitude by returning a portion of the stone. The Irish no doubt would have preferred several bags of gold but a witch who was saved from drowning revealed its real power of eloquence to the McCarthy's. By the way, anyone notice that the acronym for Blarney Stone is BS?

- 6) a) It's just a big walking stick.
- 7) a) James Joyce. Yeats got the award in 1923, Shaw in 1925, Beckett in 1969 and Heaney in 1995.
- 8) b) It was associated with St. Patrick before this but officially declared a holiday in Ireland in 1903—the first parade in Dublin was 1931. Until the 19th century, the colour associated with the day was blue rather than green.
- 9) d) thirteen million. Some historians believe that the reason drinking is irrevocably associated with St. Patrick's Day is because the Roman festival dedicated to Bacchus, the drunken old god who was god of wine, was on March 15 and 16 and it just spilled over onto the 17th.
- 10) d) Maewyn Succat.



BEGINNERS GUIDE TO RHODOS

Several years ago, North Island chapter members Mary Palmer and Bill Rozel compiled a booklet known as "A Beginner's Guide to Rhododendrons". This booklet provided information for the care of rhododendrons gathered from the personal experiences of NIRS members and through shared information in newsletters from members of the other District 1 chapters. They also relied on information found in books written by Peter and Kenneth Cox, David Leach, Ted van Veen, and of course, Harold Greer.

For those new members eager to learn the dos and don'ts of growing rhododendrons, we thought we would provide a short article each month with a segment from this booklet. Of course, opinions always vary on any subject. The growing conditions and climate in one area might be quite different from another. Your microclimate in a winter cold snap might be Zone 6, whereas others might be Zone 8. Do your research before buying and planting, and think before taking advice from others.

There are over 800 species of rhododendrons to be found growing in their native habitat, and not all are adapt for our climate. Rhodo species are found almost exclusively in the wetter mountain regions of the northern hemisphere. (*Ed. note: 'species' is both singular and plural. There is no such word as 'specie'.*)

Some authorities believe that the evolution of the rhodo began 50 million years ago from a common ancestor to the camellias and magnolias. They believe the species is still evolving today, but because of the vast time scale involved, the changes are imperceptible.

There are only 6 species native to Europe. *R. ferrugineum* and *R. hirsutum* from the Alps; *R. myrtifolium* from the Baltic region; *R. ponticum* from Spain, Portugal and Greece; *R. luteum* from Poland and Eastern Europe, and *R. lapponicum* from the Arctic regions.

North America has 27 species, 22 from the east and 5 native to the west coast. These include *R. occidentale* from California, Oregon and Washington; *R. macrophyllum* from Oregon, Washington and B.C.; *R. albiflorum* from Washington and B.C.; *R. lapponicum* from the Arctic and *R. camschatcicum* from Alaska.

In the eastern USA and Canada along the Appalachian mountain range are found about a dozen deciduous azaleas, as well as evergreens *R. minus*, *R. maximum* and *R. catawbiense*.

Australia has only two native species, and the Far East has 31 species of rhodos. New Guinea and Malaysia provide over 200 tender species, known as Vireyas, but they are generally unsuitable for growing outdoors in our climate. They can make beautiful house plants though, if given the proper conditions.

The remaining 400 or so species inhabit the most famous rhodo regions, the Sino-Himalayan mountains of western China, Tibet, Burma (Myanmar), Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan.

In future issues, we will deal with such topics as fundamental care, planting tips and basic rules for growing rhododendrons.



TIDBITS...

The QB Garden Club Alpine & Rock Garden Special Interest Group is hosting a special presentation by DAVID SELLARS on Alpine Jewels of the Olympic and Wenatchee Mountains, Washington State

Date: Wednesday, March 28... 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm
Qualicum Beach Civic Centre – Lions Room - Jones at Fern, QBDoors open at 12:45 pm

David plans to bring plants to sell. He will also present a showing of his photos entered in the 2011 NARGS Photo contest. Entry by donation to cover expenses. Donors will be entered in prize draw.

NB: Entry limited to 60 people. Please reserve by sending an email to June Strandberg, normjune@shaw.ca.

Milner Gardens:

Baking, Crafts and Yesterday's Treasures Sale
Saturday, March 10th 11:00am to 3:00pm

Tea Room Open....Admission by donation...Info:

carol.milnergardens@shaw.ca Ph 250 752 8573 Ext 224

Milner Gardens open Sundays in March 11:00am to 3:00pm; last entry at 2:30pm, entry by donation. Enjoy the early spring colour. Tea Room open for soup, tea and scones. Info at 250-752-6153 or www.milnergardens.org

Milner Gardens Volunteer Opportunity Day Saturday March 24th from 1:00pm to 3:00pm Explore volunteer opportunities at Milner Gardens, 2179 West Island Highway, Qualicum Beach. www.milnergardens.org



CORNED BEEF AND CABBAGE

(A St. Patty's Day classic)

Ingredients

- 7 quarts hot water
- 2 cups coarse pickling salt
- 1/4 cup dry mustard
- 2 tablespoons pickling spice
- 10 cloves garlic, plus 10 cloves crushed
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 8 pounds beef brisket
- 2 ribs celery, quartered crosswise
- 2 onions, quartered
- 5 large red potatoes, halved
- 3 carrots, peeled and cut crosswise into thirds
- 3 parsnips, peeled and cut crosswise into thirds
- 3 turnips, peeled and quartered
- 1 head of cabbage, cut into 6 wedges

Directions

1. In an 8-quart *non-reactive* container, stir together hot water, pickling salt, dry mustard, pickling spice, whole garlic cloves, and pepper; let cool. Add beef, top with a plate to weigh it down and keep submerged. Let soak in brining liquid for at least 3 days and up to 6 days in the refrigerator.
2. Rinse brisket under cold water; place in a large pot with remaining crushed garlic cloves, celery, and onions. Add enough water to cover. Bring to a boil, skimming off scum, cover pot, and cook for 2 hours.
3. Uncover to add potatoes, carrots, parsnips, turnips, and cabbage. Cover, and continue to cook until the meat and vegetables are tender, about 1 1/2 hours more.

OKANAGAN PEACH CAKE

(Peter Guertler)

Okanagan peaches find a happy home in rich sour cream coffee cake batter.

Ingredients:

- 1 ½ C flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp baking soda
- ¼ tsp salt
- A pinch of nutmeg
- ½ C butter (softened)
- ¾ C Brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 2/3 C sour cream
- 2 peaches
- pitted and cut into 6 pieces each.
- 1 Tbsp icing sugar



Whisk together flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt and nutmeg.

In large bowl, beat butter with brown sugar until well combined. Beat in eggs, 1 at a time; beat in vanilla. Stir in sour cream until smooth.

Stir in flour mixture just until smooth; scrape into greased 9 inch spring-form pan. Spread batter evenly in pan and smooth top.

Arrange peach slices over batter in circle around edge of pan. Bake in 350 degree oven until cake tester inserted in middle comes out clean, approx 50 minutes.

Let the pan cool on a rack for 10 minutes. Transfer the cake to a cooling rack. Cool completely then dust with icing sugar.

Irish Blessings

May your blessings outnumber
the shamrocks that grow.

And may trouble avoid you

wherever you go.

