



The Rhodoteller

www.nirs.rhodos.ca

MAY

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
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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.

PO Box 3183, Courtenay, BC, Canada V9N 5N4

COMING EVENTS

1st May 2012-Executive Meeting 2:00 pm

The executive meeting will be held at the home of Louise and Roger Casson: 2345 Suffolk Cres. Crown Isle Subdivision. Directions: Driving along Lerwick, turn onto Idiens then turn right on Suffolk Crescent.

6th May 2012-Rhodo Sale and Show

8th May 2012-Annual General Meeting

Venue: This year's Annual General Meeting will be held in the garden of Gloria and Bernie Guyader, 1965-6th Street, Courtenay.(From Back Road, turn up 6th to the top, right side at the bend) This is an outdoor event so please dress appropriately in case of a cool evening, and remember to bring a lawn chair.

Note: Meeting will start at 6:30 pm with a tour of the garden. The regular portion of the meeting will follow around 7:30 pm. Dress warmly!!!

13th May 2012-Annual Garden Tour

Executive View

...by Diana Scott

May has once again been proclaimed as Rhododendron Month in the City of Courtenay, and our club will be making the most of each day! When not in our gardens or admiring the gardens of friends and neighbours, we'll be together as a group enjoying the various events we have planned for the month.

We begin the month with our Rhodo Sale and Truss Display on Sunday, May 6th, followed by the 6th Annual Morrison Bunwich late lunch and foot rest. Our 17th Annual Mother's Day Garden Tour takes place on May 13th with seven beautiful gardens, primarily in the Royston area. If you have not already signed up to volunteer at these events, make sure you contact me in order to be part of the experience! (338-0208; diascott@telus.net)

Our Annual General Meeting on May 8th will be held at 1965 6th Street East, in the garden of Bernie and Gloria Guyader. We typically arrive around 6:30pm so that we can tour the garden and socialize before the meeting starts at 7:30pm. Please bring a chair to sit on as usual! We will have a short business meeting, review our committee reports, hold the 'elections' and enjoy some lovely beverages and goodies! We will have our raffle draws as usual, and we have two delightful rhodos for this month.



Razorbill

The first is 'Razorbill', originally donated by

Ken Webb. This lepidote rhododendron is one of the Cox hybrids, a spinuliferum seedling with tubular shaped bright pink blossoms and dark green, somewhat crinkled leaves. A semi-dwarf plant it will grow wider than tall in the 2-3 foot range.



Percy Wiseman

The second is one of our club favourites - 'Percy Wiseman' (*degronianum* ssp *yakushimanum* x *Fabia Tangerine*) selfed; hybridized by Waterer. The flowers are cream flushed with pink, fading to white with a yellow throat on a compact plant growing to 3 feet in 10 years. Rhododendron 'Percy Wiseman' was the ARS Northwestern Rhodo of the Year in 2004. Great rhodos!

We are delighted to welcome our friends from the Whidbey Chapter who will be with us from May 15th to May 17th. Paul Wurz has organized a wonderful few days where we will tour gardens and party! Such fun.

To top off the month Pauline Thompson has been working with the Saltspring Island Garden Club to prepare a Members' Garden Tour on May 24th. Our Members' Tour is always a treat and we look forward to seeing those special gardens on Saltspring!

As the weather warms up and the rhodos come into their glory, we anticipate many more members of the public out walking at the Airpark. Watch for the email notices for our work parties at the Comox Valley Rhododendron Garden and be sure to come out to help. We always have a fun time socializing while we work, and it's a great way to review your rhodo pruning, deadheading and weeding skills!





Member's Notes

...by Dave Godfrey

Recently, a friend sent me a tip for emergency lights during a power outage. If you have solar lights around your garden, during a power outage bring a few indoors to light the rooms. Our member **Chris Aldred** tried this experiment. She brought in a solar light at 8:30 PM after a relatively cloudy day and placed it in a vase in her darkened kitchen. It lit up the room all night and was still working fine at 7:30 the next morning. Although the early versions of solar lights did not have much longevity, the newer lights, with LED technology and improved battery life, work much longer. Give them a try sometime!

Something else NIRS members might like to try is the club's pH soil tester pen. Since Harry is no longer the centrally located contact member, **Bernie Guyader** has agreed to be the caretaker of this device. If you wish to find out the pH levels of your garden, you are more than welcome to borrow the tester. Just give Bernie a call and he will arrange a time for you to pick it up. Directions to their garden will be in this newsletter as Bernie and Gloria are hosting our AGM on May 8th.

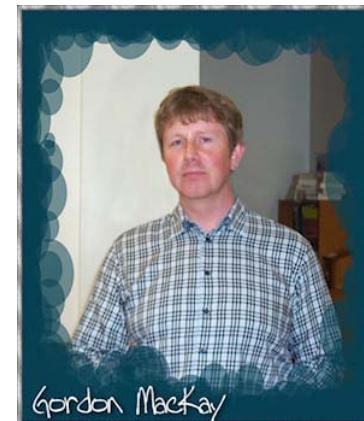
Speaking of meetings, wasn't that a tremendous turnout for our April meeting with 71 members and guests in attendance! **Gayle and Alan McRae** from the Nanaimo chapter were two of our guests, as Gayle gave an "educational" on the ARS Western Fall Conference coming this September. As she mentioned, being centrally located on Vancouver Island with most of District One's chapters close-by, they're expecting a large number of attendees. They need members to register early in order to plan all the events and functions associated with organizing the conference. So don't delay... if you plan to attend, go to their website <http://arsnanaimo2012.ca/> check out the schedule and print off a registration form. There is a discount for those registering before August 1st, and special rates offered at the conference hotel, the Coast Bastion Inn.

During the business portion of the meeting, **President Diana Scott** reminded all members of the need for volunteers for both our Sale & Show on Sunday, May 6th, and gate sitters for our 17th annual Mother's Day Garden Tour the following Sunday, May 13th. Members able to assist with these fund raising events should contact Diana to advise of your availability. More information to follow.

Pauline Thompson was taking names and collecting \$40 cheques or cash for the planned garden tour bus trip to Salt Spring Island on May 24th. Following the meeting, reservations on the 47 passenger bus were open to guests and friends. If any members still wish to join this exciting garden tour, be sure to contact Pauline as soon as possible.

During the Show & Tell portion of the meeting, **Diana Scott** led a parade of members, including **Anne Chevrier, Bernie Guyader, Jill Gould, Don Law and Robert Argall**, all anxious to show off some of the many and varied blooms that are beginning to give life to their gardens. It is always interesting to see and hear about the variety of plants others have in their gardens. As this was the last opportunity for this season, the executive would like to thank all those members who took the time to provide our Show & Tell items throughout the meetings.

With the meeting ended, it was time for our guest speaker **Gordon MacKay** from Alba Plants in Cowichan. Gordon comes from a long line of horticulturalists from Argyll, on the west coast of Scotland. His presentation of "Companion Plants for Rhododendrons" provided an informative and entertaining program, interspersed with a great sense of humour. Hostas and Kalmias are typical companions for the rhododendron gardens. But depending on the choice of garden layout by some members, crevice gardens for alpine plants are also popular. As Gordon pointed out, whenever someone comments about a dying plant in his garden, he just simply refers to it as "short-lived!"



Gordon MacKay

In addition to his presentation, Gordon brought along a selection of companion plants for sale to our members. Many took advantage of this opportunity to buy a few additions for their gardens.

Dick Bonney was kind enough to host Gordon and his son overnight. Shortly after their visit, Gordon took the time to email me and thank us for our interest and hospitality. In Gordon's words..." *I was really impressed and inspired by the overall interest in my plants and in the talk. You have a wonderful group. Ole had a blast too!*" Gordon's 11 year old

son, Ole, who accompanied him on the trip from Cowichan, is likely the youngest person to ever attend one of our chapter's meetings and we thanked both of them for taking the time to attend.

Before heading home from the meeting, the winners were drawn for the many raffle and door prizes. R. 'Fantastica' was won by *Alice Potts*; R. 'Peppermint Twist' won by *Fiona Clarke*; R. 'Cupcake', donated by *Arthur Ralts*, was won by *Chris Aldred*; and a 'Dwarf Alberta Spruce' kindly donated by *Gordon MacKay* won by *Helen Stefiuk*. Door prize winners included guest *Michael Goodchild* winner of a bottle of concentrated Seaweed Fertilizer donated by *Gordon MacKay*; and *Rick Clough* and guest *Alan McRae* each won a package of spring bulbs.

In other news, *VP Paul Wurz* advises that we have 16 members of the Whidbey Island chapter (6 couples and 4 singles) planning a garden tour to our area from May 15th to 17th. Upon arrival on Tuesday May 15th, the visitors will be treated to a "Meet & Greet" BBQ with their host billets and members of the executive. This event will be hosted at the garden of our newest members *Becci & Keith Russell*.

On Wednesday morning, visitors and all members of the NIRS are invited to tour the Woodland Gardens on the way to *Lynn & Paul Wurz* Hidden Acres Garden in Campbell River. Lunch will be provided at the Wurz' garden. On the way back from Campbell River, members will be stopping to tour several gardens in Miracle Beach area, arriving back at *Adela and Bob Smith's* garden around 5:30 PM. There will be an opportunity to tour the Smiths garden before a potluck dinner is enjoyed by all. *Brian Staton* is organizing the pot luck, so please advise Brian if you plan to attend. Those unable to make the tour during the day are most welcome to join the group for the potluck dinner at 6 PM.

Before departing for home on Thursday morning, the Whidbey visitors will enjoy a garden tour of *Antje & Peter Guertler*, as well as the garden of *Robert Argall*. Again, our members are most welcome to join this tour of the gardens. Speaking of tours of members' gardens, *Robert Argall* has graciously offered to be the first to open his garden for all our members to enjoy. The garden will be open this Sunday, April 29th at 1:30 PM. With all the spring bulbs and early Rhodos in full bloom, this garden is sure to be spectacular. If any other members wish to open their garden for members to tour, please advise *Noni Godfrey* of the date and time and she will notify the members via email.

As mentioned, our Rhodo Sale & Truss Display is just around the corner. The Sale is once again at the K'omox Band Hall on Comox Avenue (Dyke Road). Anyone able to help with the pre-event setup can meet at the hall at 7 PM on Saturday evening. It is always a bonus to have some help

setting up the tables and truss display tables ahead of time. Also, any members with plants and items to donate to our NIRS companion plant table are encouraged to drop them off at 7PM to avoid a big rush in the morning.

On Sunday morning, helpers can park BEHIND the hall on the grass - not in the parking lot, or in the yard or driveways of the residents. We usually start bringing in our plants after 8:30 am. Helping vendors set up, getting our NIRS plants priced and organized, and setting up the Truss Display typically takes the majority of time and helpers. We try to get most of the setup completed by 9:45 in order to have a short coffee break before the doors open to the public at 10 AM. We will have coffee and tea on, and we hope that some folks bring goodies for the snacks!

Following the cleanup of the hall, all members are invited to Bernice Morrison's for a late lunch (1:30ish), funded by the club, but totally prepared by Bernice (address: 951 Aspen Road, off Idiens Way). The Morrison Bunwich is a great opportunity to relax, unwind and reflect on the busy sale activities.

Copies of the Sale and Garden Tour posters will be attached to this newsletter. We hope that you are able to print off a few copies and post them on your neighbourhood bulletin boards or by post boxes. Everyone's help in promoting and running these major fund raising events is very much appreciated.

Our first work party at the Comox Valley Rhodo Garden was held on Thursday, April 12th. A dozen members came out to help weed the gardens and paths, and to generally cleanup for the spring events. We encourage those attending our Mother's Day garden tour to include a tour around the many beautiful rhododendrons found in the gardens. Our visitors from Whidbey Island will be directed to meet at the garden and tour it before continuing on to the Russell's for the Meet & Greet BBQ.

Photos of the work party are already posted to our website (www.nirs.rhodos.ca) and additional photos of our many May events will also be posted in the near future. We look forward to seeing many of our members at the Sale, the AGM and the Garden Tour.

*Yesterday the twig was brown and bare;
Today the glint of green is there;
Tomorrow will be leaflets spare;
I know no thing so wondrous fair.
No miracle so strangely rare.
I wonder what will next be there!
...L.H. Bailey*

HYBRIDS

A Washington Connection

...by Diana Scott

We are very familiar with the beautiful rhododendron hybrids that Harry Wright created here in the Comox Valley, and many of us have at least one of these plants in our gardens. Harry was looking for good yellows that would bloom throughout the season, and in later years his interest moved to rhodos that carried a lovely scent. His best selection with both beauty and fragrance is, of course, Rhododendron "Gwendolyn Wright". To get a sense of its parentage Harry listed the following on the Hirsutum website: ('Ring of Fire' x 'Courtenay Queen') =('Darigold' x 'Idealist') x ('Haida Gold' x 'Golden Star') =([('wardii x Medusa Group' x 'Autumn Gold') x (R. wardii var wardii x 'Exbury Naomi')]x[(R. wardii var wardii x 'Goldfort Group') x (R. fortunei ssp fortunei x R. wardii var wardii)]. Although not all hybrids have such a complex heredity, it demonstrates the detailed record-keeping and patience required to develop and register a named rhododendron.

In addition to our Canadian and in particular, Vancouver Island hybridizers, the Pacific Northwest has been blessed with a number of rhodo enthusiasts who have devoted countless years to create unique rhododendrons with specific and noteworthy qualities. The results have ranged from plants that turned out to be too much like one of the parent plants, to wonderful surprises worthy of naming and perhaps registering. It takes many years and thoughtful deliberation from the time that seed and pollen is selected through the growing years, to a final decision.

Although written a number of years ago, I recently came across a very interesting article by Gwen Bell on "Washington Hybridizers Create Plants for the Future - What Should a New Hybrid Rhododendron Be?" which was in the 1997 JARS and is available on the ARS website under Journal Articles from the Plant Care section. Gwen interviewed a number of the Washington State hybridizers about their programs and the resulting article gives us a sense of what they were looking for and some of their results at that time. It was fun to note that a number of the hybridizers were familiar to me, and that I am growing several of 'their' plants in our garden. It was also evident, however, that many of the plants that they created are not readily available to us, or are only available through specialty nurseries. I think that it may be worth our while to seek out more of these

interesting hybrids created so close to home!

In our garden we have several rhodos hybridized by the late Warren Berg of the Seattle and Olympic Peninsula Chapters. According to Gwen Bell's article, Berg was looking for hardy hybrids with nice flowers and indumented foliage. He worked primarily with *R. keiskei* "Yaku Fairy"; *R. proteoides*; and *R. yakushimanum* to create his hybrids.



In our garden we have 'Golfer' (*degronianum* ssp *yakushimanum* x *R. pseudochrysanthum*) known for its wonderful foliage. It has silver indumentum and outstanding silvery-frosted tomentum on its new growth. Rose pink buds open to pink flowers that eventually fade to white. It was named for Berg's wife Pat who was an avid and well-known golfer. We bought this plant after admiring the one in Dave and Marleen Cruq's garden. Dave always said it was one of his favourite plants and I can see why!



We have two of Berg's smaller-leaved rhodos that are quite popular in our area. 'Ginny Gee' (*keiskei*, prostrate form x *racemosum*) is a dense, compact plant with small matte green leaves. When in bloom the plant is covered with bright pink buds that open to paler pink flowers. It was named by Warren Berg after friend and fellow plantsman Henry (Hank) Schannen's wife Virginia. It is a great rhodo for our garden because it is relatively drought, cold, and heat resistant. The Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden website



quotes Peter Cox as saying that Ginny Gee is “one of the finest dwarf hybrids ever raised”. Who wouldn’t want this plant?! Also in our garden is Patty Bee (keiskei ‘Yaku Fairy’ x fletcheranum), another low growing, compact rhodo hybridized by Berg. It has small, glossy dark green leaves that turn bronze in the autumn, and lax trusses of primrose yellow flowers, trumpet-shaped and somewhat larger than those of Ginny Gee.



Patty Bee

Warren Berg hybridized many rhododendrons that do well in our area. From the names he chose for his plants, his hobby as a bee keeper is evident! Some of his registered hybrids include 'Berg's Bonnie Bee', 'Berg's Queen Bee', 'Fairy Mary', 'Ginny Gee', 'Golden Bee', 'Golden Princess', 'Honey Bee', 'Jan Bee', 'June Bee' 'King Bee', 'Must Bee' 'Patty Bee', 'Peter Bee', 'Too Bee', 'Wanna Bee', 'Wee Bee', 'Web's Bee' and 'Whid Bee'. These plants do so well in our garden that I will be looking for more to add to our collection.

Among the many Washington State Hybridizers mentioned in Gwen Bell’s article are Jim Barlup, Elsie Watson, and Frank Fujioka. We are hoping to have Jim Barlup as a speaker in the coming year and highlight some of his many hybrids. Although I don’t have any of Elsie Watson’s hybrids in our garden, I do have Frank Fujioka’s hybrid ‘Elsie Watson’ ('Anna' x 'Purple Lace')! Next month we will look at some of Frank’s hybrids along with those of Bill Stipe of Glyneneden Garden.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the North Island Rhododendron Society will be held on Tuesday, 8th May 2012 at 7:30 pm at the Guyader’s garden 1965 6th St. East. Business to come before the meeting will include the Annual Financial Report, Reports from Committees, and the Election of Directors and Officers for 2012-2013.

Following the AGM, the elected Board will select a President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer from among the elected Directors and will assign roles to Committee Chairs.



The styles of homes and gardens continually evolve through time, but one iconic feature will never change, the garden gnome.

Garden gnomes will forever adapt to modern styles and trends, but their popularity and demand will never diminish.

Modern garden gnomes are classified into three main categories. The “Worker Gnome” is characterized by their possession of tools. The “Leisure Gnome” is characterized by the emphasis on relaxation. Lastly, the “Culture Gnome” is characterized by the arts, typically the gnome has a musical instrument.



The name gnome is said to come from the latin word “genomes”, meaning earth dweller. In fairy tales gnomes have often been mistaken as goblins, dwarves and even elves, however gnomes are far from what goblins, dwarves and elves portray. Gnomes are magical creatures from the underground.



Gnomes have historically been described as small stout beings and are known by their bright red pointed hats, solid coloured clothes and their long white beards. Though sightings of female gnomes are rarely reported, gnome women have the same characteristics of the male, excluding the beard.

It is believed that gnomes move through the earth as easily as humans walk upon it. They first appeared in European folklore, in the early 1800s, as benevolent creatures who possess magical powers used to protect, reward and punish. They are believed to be created with the purpose of protecting the earth and assisting nature. For hundreds of years farmers, merchants and housewives have featured these creatures on their land believing that these little creatures will help them achieve success.



Garden gnomes are based on legendary myth, magic and fairy tales. Gnomes are believed to be the guardians of the treasure found underground, mainly gold. They are the guardians of many of the earth’s natural resources. It is believed that they have magical power over these treasures, and can use this power to either reward or punish humans.

Owning a lawn or garden gnome is a delightful experience! They help bring our imaginations to life. Maybe you should consider putting a little magic back into your garden this spring!!! (Reprinted from the Nanaimo Chapter’s newsletter)





WHAT'S IN A NAME

...by Bernie Guyader

I know most of us grow hybrid Rhodos but have you ever thought of how the species got named or for that matter how all plant species are named. I know most people don't want to bother with botanical names, but, if we know the proper names we can very quickly identify their horticultural requirements.

The species names are very descriptive, let's look at some items:

Hemisphere:	orientalis	Eastern
	occidentale	Western
Country:	sinensis	of China
	korean	Korea
	arabicus	Africa
	japonica	Japan
Habitat:	maritime	by the sea
	rivulus	by the river
	atlanticum	Atlantic coast
People:	fargesii	after Farges
	falconeri	Falcon
	forestii	Forrest
Season:	vernalis or vernum	Spring
	Autumnali	Fall
	Praecox	early flowering
Flora:	flowers longiflora	long flowered
	multiflora	many flowers
	grandiflora	large flowers
	triflora	three flowered
	uniflora	one flowered...etc
Fruit:	carpum	
Folia:	foliage rotundifolia	round leaves
	palmatum	hand shaped
	hirsutum	hairy
	villosum	soft hairy
	angustifolia	narrow leaves
	pictum	painted leaves
	oppositifolium	opposite leaves
Dhvlla:	leaves octophyllum	eight leaved
	Triphylla	three leaved
	Variegatum	variegated
	Arguta	sharply toothed

Growth habit:	nana	dwarf
	erecta	upright
	pendulous	weeping
	adscendens	ascending
	arboretum	tree like
	annua	annual
	giganteum	very larg
	stolonifera	with stolons
Colour:	bicolor	2 colours
	discolor	2 colours on leaves
	cyaneum	blue flowers
	sulpureus	sulfur coloured
	roseum	rose coloured
	carnea	flesh coloured
	luteum	yellow coloured
	nigrum	black

Fragrance:	fragrans	fragrant flowers
	odoratissimum	most fragrant
	Foetida	unpleasant

If a name has "oides" which means "like" in the name such as ledoides, this tell us that it is like the ledum or Labrador Tea or let's look at R. cyanocarpum, what is its description? Or R. canadense "albiflorum"?



The Victoria Propagating Group is going to hold another Propagating Workshop. This time it will be on October 13th, 2012. Again it will be at Madeleine & Ken's house – 5008 Old West Saanich Road, Saanich, B.C. This will be a hands on type of thing where everyone will be able to choose cuttings and actually stick them in our propagator. We will be working mostly outside and in the garden, so warm and dry clothes will be necessary. Talks and discussions will include most of the local propagators and hybridizers. The charge will be \$25 and will include a hot lunch and coffee breaks. We will start around 9:30 am to give people from the mainland and up island time to get here. We hope to finish with an early dinner at a local restaurant (not included) to give enough time for everyone to get home if they have to.

For registration and questions email Ken & Madeleine at kenwebb@live.ca or phone 250-744-1785.

Please register early because we do have limited space.





Quadra Island Quilt and Garden Tour

June 23 and 24, 10am - 4pm - Rain or shine. Come and enjoy a selection of unique gardens and quilts on our beautiful island. Gardeners and quilters will be on hand to share their enthusiasm. Bring a picnic or indulge in lunch at one of our local restaurants. Cost is \$12 / person and covers both days. Tickets are available from the Tourist Bureau in Campbell River and on Quadra Island. For info contact Joy Bird 250-285-3300 or quadrabirds@gmail.com.



The Master Gardeners Association of BC

Is holding its fall conference in Nanaimo this year in October and there will be lots of good information for the home gardener – everyone is welcome!

The advance publicity and registration for the MGABC Conference in Nanaimo on October 20th and 21st is now up at the mgabc.org website. HOME page, at NEWS.

Take advantage of the Early Bird pricing, have a look, and let all your gardening friends know, this event is open to the public.



The Cowichan Valley Rhodo Society

Has organized another exciting two-day tour of special gardens in the Vancouver area on May 11th and 12th.

For more information or TO CONFIRM, please contact Bill at 250 743 9882 or wedumont@hotmail.com. This tour will sell out quickly so don't delay in submitting your deposit.



The Cowichan Valley Rhodo Society

Regular meeting May 2nd - 7.30 pm, will feature Dennis Bottemiller's lecture on the success and failures of the propagation program at the Rhododendron Species Botanic Garden. He is in charge of producing about 40,000 cutting and seedlings a year.

All welcome. Location is St John's Anglican Church - 1st and Jubilee in old Duncan - off the Trans-Canada at the Duncan exit, just after Canadian Tire. Straight through the roundabout and continue through the light to 1st [about 5 short blocks]. The church parking is at the end of the block on the left.



Recipe Requests

Cream Cheese Cake Mix Cookies

Ingredients:

1 box cake mix, any flavour
8 oz cream cheese room temperature
 $\frac{1}{4}$ C butter, room temperature
1 large egg
1 tsp vanilla (optional, depending on cake flavour)
1 C any add-ins (choc chips, candy, nuts, etc)
Amounts can be varied, for choc chip I added one 12 oz bag of semisweet chips.



Directions:

Preheat oven to 375°F.



Cream together butter and cream cheese. Add egg and vanilla and mix until well blended. Stir in the cake mix a little at a time until it's all blended and then add any chips, candy or nuts, as you like.

Bake for approx 10 minutes, until edges are brown.



ARS Western Fall Regional Conference, Nanaimo B.C.

"RHODOS IN PARADISE - DESTINATION VANCOUVER ISLAND"
September 21st - 23rd, 2012

For full details:

Check out the **brand new** website at
<http://arsnanaimo2012.ca/>

Registration is open now!

We encourage you to register early!

