



The Rhodoteller

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November

North Island Rhododendron Society

2012/2013 Executive



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Ruth Fowler890-9448

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 Nov 2012-Executive Meeting 2:00 pm

The executive meeting will be held at the home of Dick Bonney 3293 Seabank Road Courtenay.

13th Nov 2012-Regular Monthly Meeting

Join us on Tuesday, November 13th, for another amazing PowerPoint presentation. In part 2 of their presentation, Susan and Art Lightburn will travel to some of the less-frequented regions of China and then on to the plateaus of Tibet. During their seven-week trip, the Lightburns visited many of the sites in southern China not included in standard China itineraries.

Among the highlights were photographing the rich cultural mix of ethnic groups in this region, the spectacular terraced rice fields near Kunming, pandas in Chengdu and a journey on the dramatic 40-hour train ride to Tibet. As a final highlight, the Lightburns visited expansive rhododendron gardens clinging to a mountainside in Dalian. While fossil evidence for the rhododendron reaches back 50 million years and its cultivation history is a tad sketchy, China was definitely the destination for ardent 19th century collectors who introduced vast specimens to the world and fanned enthusiasm for the plant.

Executive View

...by Paul Wurz

There is always the question: "What is the best way to prepare your rhodo garden for the winter?"

One option often proposed by the "naturalists", or those that do not like the winter rains, is to leave it alone and let nature take its course. This involves leaving all the leaves that have fallen in the last several months and let them provide a natural cover and mulch to protect the plants during the winter. This is basically the process in the wild and has kept native plants thriving for centuries.

The other option is to rake and collect fallen leaves and either burn or compost them. Rationale for burning is to destroy any diseases or insects that maybe harmful to the plants, i.e.: weevils, mildew, etc.

We compost our leaf collection and although rhodo leaves do not compost very quickly, they usually are accompanied by alder leaves, coniferous needles, and supplemented with manure and bark mulch. With our garden, which is rather large, we tend to collect several hundred wheel barrow loads over the winter.

Further rationale for collecting debris from your rhodo patch is that it does provide an opportunity to see what is going on throughout your garden, particularly at the less obvious parts. It is surprising what you might find; dead branches, invasive weeds and shrubs, and even dead plants.

Also, this fall clean-up provides a great opportunity to do a little extra weeding and pruning. Leaves clean up does make it a bit easier in the spring to fertilize and irrigate. Although leaving the leaves may make this process less important.

In conclusion, the choice is yours! I think I see the elusive sun poking through the clouds, so perhaps I will get the wheel barrow out, get a little exercise and fresh air!

I hope to see you all on November 13th to hear Part 2 of the presentations from the Lightburns.

Raffle Rhodos

...by Diana Scott

Our first plant for the November Raffle is *Rhododendron* 'Elizabeth de Rothschild' ('Lionel's Triumph' x 'Exbury Naomi') hybridized by British plantsman Edmund Leopold de Rothschild in 1965 and named after his first wife. This elepidote rhodo, grown on by the club from a cutting donated by Alan Campbell, will ultimately become a gorgeous small tree with long dark green leaves and an upright habit. A late midseason bloomer 'Elizabeth de Rothschild' displays large ball-shaped trusses of creamy pale yellow flowers that show some maroon spotting at the throat. This hybrid was highly praised when it was first introduced, and thought to be a splendid plant to name after the lovely Mrs. Rothschild.



Our second raffle plant is *Rhododendron* 'Catawbiense Album' (Catawba Album). The species *R. catawbiense* is a large, cold-hardy native of the Appalachian Mountains, often used in hybridizing. Although flowering mainly in purple, it occasionally has pink or white flowers. Considered one of the best whites ever developed, *R. 'Catawbiense Album'* (*R. catawbiense* x ?) is one of the Ironclad rhodos bred by the English hybridizer Anthony Waterer in 1886. It is a plant

of extreme hardiness and vigor, becoming an openly branched small tree with shiny, slightly convex deep green leaves. The buds are tinged with pink, opening to pure white flowers with greenish spotting in the throat. This Ironclad will do well in full sun, but prefers dappled sunlight. Flowering in late May, R. 'Catawbiense Album' will put on a stunning show with its large conical-shaped trusses!



Member's Notes

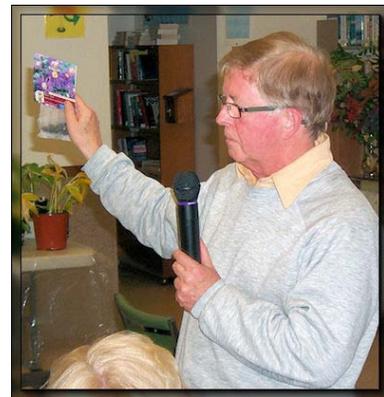
...by Dave Godfrey

Another well-attended meeting on October 9th with 48 members and two guests packing the hall for an opportunity to renew friendships over coffee and goodies, buy some bargains from the Revenue table, purchase tickets on the raffles and to hear our guest speakers for the evening.

Following a short business portion of the meeting, **President Paul Wurz** invited members to explain their contributions to the "Show & Tell". **Diana Scott** and **Dick Bonney** had some lovely examples of fall foliage adding colour to the gardens; while **Chris Aldred** and **Paul Wurz** explained some of the many blossoms that appear at this time of year in their gardens.



Robert Argall provided an educational for our meeting with his "Top Five" favourite bulbs to be planted in the fall. As Robert explained, he often plants thousands of bulbs each year to compliment his fabulous display of colour each spring.



After a short intermission, it was time for our evening's program presented by **Barb & Brian Staton**. The Statons had recently travelled along the Oregon and California coasts to visit some of the many beautiful gardens found there. Their presentation began with a walk around Mike Bones' property, as well as other community gardens in Florence, Oregon. It was then on to the Redwood country of Eureka, California and all the beauty this area has to offer, before heading to Fort Bragg – gateway to the Mendocino Coast. As Barb explained, it was the DVD of the Mendocino gardens borrowed from our NIRS library that prompted them to make the trip.

The final stop for their tour, and the program, was the magnificent Hearst Castle halfway between San Francisco and Los Angeles. The original 40,000 acre property was purchased by George Hearst, a wealthy miner. In 1919, his only son – publishing legend William Randolph Hearst, inherited the ranch which by then had grown to 250,000 acres. Originally owned by the Hearst family, the property is now managed by the California State Parks system.

The magnificent Hearst Castle



Although it was an overcast day when the Statons visited the mountain-top location, the magnificence of the gardens, the art work and the buildings were evident in the many pictures they shared. Their program will likely encourage other members to tour these same gardens along the Oregon and California coasts. A big thank you goes out to Barb and Brian for sharing their adventures with the rest of us in attendance.

Congratulations to all our many draw winners for the evening. For the rhodo raffle prizes 'Polar Bear' – **Lois Clyde** and 'Fireman Jeff' – **Olive Hagar**. To go along with the educational, the door prizes for the evening were 6 bags of fall bulbs purchased by the club. The draw winners were **Lynn Wurz, Dany Fortin, Ross Munro, Fran Thornton, Helen Stefiuk** and **Antje Guertler**. An additional door prize of a potted Garry Oak, generously donated by **Diana Scott**, was won by **Judi Murakami**.

As announced at the meeting by garden director **Ross Munro**, a work party was called for the CVRG on Tuesday morning, October 16th at 10 AM. Once again, after the first fall rains over the weekend, the weather was fabulous for the moving of some large rhodos from behind the chamber building and spreading the three loads of mulch delivered by the city. A total of 17 enthusiastic members turned out to get all the work completed in a couple of hours. This is a remarkable donation of time by our members, who no doubt have work to do putting their own gardens to bed for the season. Thank you one and all for your time and energy. (See our website for photos of all work parties this season.)

Membership chair, **Brian Staton**, reports that we now have 47 regular memberships and 3 associates renewed for 2013. We encourage those who have not yet renewed to either bring their \$35 dues to our November meeting or mail a cheque to the address listed at the bottom of the front page of each newsletter. This is one of your last chances to ensure you will not miss the January mailing of your ARS Journal.

Ian Efford, President of the Cowichan chapter, reports that the propagation workshop on Saturday, October 13th was well attended by 38 enthusiasts from Vancouver Island and the mainland, including **Dennis Bottemiller** from the RSBG. Hosted by **Ken and Madeline Webb** at their home in Saanich, the hands-on workshop provided an interesting learning experience with everyone allowed to take cuttings from the Webb's garden to plant in their propagator.

The next day (Sunday Oct. 14th) the first gathering of the planning committee for the May 2015 ARS Annual Convention was hosted by VicRS President **Calvin Parsons** at his home in Esquimalt. The ARS National Convention will be held in the Victoria area, probably Sydney, and is expected to attract 600 to 1000 participants from around North America and the world.

One of the important issues discussed at this inaugural meeting was the concept of the convention being a "District 1" conference, rather than a Victoria RS conference. If it were a District Convention, then each of the seven chapters would be asked to take on a specific task. This concept worked extremely well in spreading the workload at the recent Nanaimo Western Regional convention. A particular advantage to holding a "district conference" is any profits gained would be shared between the participant chapters. As some conventions are very profitable, this becomes an attractive proposition. Your suggestions as to how North Island might help in some way should be made to any member of the executive. More details to follow in the coming months.

As we rapidly approach the Christmas holiday season, **Margaret Griffith-Cochrane**, organizer for our annual Christmas hamper program, asks that any members wishing to donate non-perishable items or cash towards the hamper please bring them to our November meeting. The hamper is usually delivered to the Salvation Army immediately following our Christmas party in December. Although there may be another opportunity to bring in your donations at the party, it is better to receive them well ahead in order to identify any items which may be lacking. Please keep in mind, this is strictly a voluntary program and members are under no obligation to participate.

Finally, a reminder that we do appreciate any donations you can bring for our Revenue Table each month. We've had some very generous donations in the last few months, and **Chris Aldred** is appreciative of any plants, preserves, fruits or garden related items. As you continue to prepare your gardens for the winter season and begin splitting up some plants, why not pop some into a pot and bring them along to share with other members. Also, if you have any Christmas gift bags to donate, Christine would appreciate

these as well. You never know, you may even get the bag back... complete with a gift at our party on December 11th.

Thanks to all the members who brought the delicious assortment of goodies to our October meeting. Those members who have indicated they would provide goodies for the November 13th meeting are, *Lily Vanderhorst, Dick Bonney, Dany Fortin, Ron Cameron* and *Charline Law*. NIRS associate members *Susan & Art Lightburn* will be our guest speakers for the November meeting presenting Part 2 of their "Trip to China" program. For those who can make it, we look forward to seeing you, and enjoying some goodies at our November meeting...

Why do leaves change colour in fall:

(From NIRS Newsletter Nov 1993 Vol 8 Issue #3)

Penelope Hobhouse, in her book "Flower Gardens" (Little, Brown & Co.) explains this quite clearly.

Anthocyanins and anthoxanthins are the main flower pigments. Anthocyanins, which are affected by soil acidity, give reddish tints to flowers and leaves; while anthoxanthins produce a range of yellows, from pale to dark. These pigments are water-soluble. When both sets of pigments are present, colours range through browns to blues.

Plastid pigments are found in the wall lining of plant cells, and they do not dissolve. Greenness in leaves and stems is caused by chlorophyll, the most important plastid. Chlorophyll is essential for photosynthesis. Although usually masked by chlorophyll, soluble pigments are also present in leaf cells. In some plants these pigments override the green, to give leaves a bronze, purple or pink colour.

These colours last the whole season in deciduous plants, though they often become darker in the summer. Then the chlorophyll starts to break down, producing droplets of carotenoid pigments which turns leaves yellow. As nights get colder, sugar starts building up in plant tissues, and this activates the anthocyanins and anthoxanthins in the sap, causing the leaves to turn red or golden.

In areas of high acidity, autumn colours are more startling than in alkaline areas. Early sharp frosts produce brighter colours, whereas a long gradual decline in temperatures often cause leaf textures to deteriorate before the sugars build up.



More on Why Do Leaves Change Colour

Every year at this time we look around in wonder, and then try to explain why and how it happens. Quoting from *Amateur Gardening*: "In the sap and some of the cells of plants are pigments, the most well known being the green chlorophyll. The other pigments carotin (orange & red) and xanthophyll, which is basically yellow.

Under temperatures below 45F, chlorophyll production ceases and a breakdown of all the pigments occurs. Usually chlorophyll breaks down first, thereby exposing the other colours. If these pigments are in abundance, then one would expect good autumnal displays, but the situation is not that simple.

During the growing season, plants with the use of chlorophyll and sunlight change carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and water from the soil, through the process termed photosynthesis, into sugars. These sugars are used as energy by the plants, or combined with other chemicals to form tissue-producing materials.

Excess produced during the growing season may be stored in the roots and stems. Other excesses are converted into flavinoids (other coloured substances), particularly if cool nights slow the movement of sugars produced during the previous day; a safety mechanism to prevent a high sugar concentration in leaves.

Therefore, cool nights following sunny days should encourage the production of orange flavones or red-scarlet or purple anthocyanins. Anyone who has mixed colours knows red and yellow mixed will produce orange, but yellow mixed with purple will give brown shades. Combine these two colour-producing methods with tannins naturally produced in many plants, along with the oils that some plants produce from excess sugars and starches, and waste matter deposited in leaves, and a more complicated situation arises.

Some plants are very reliable in their production of needed chemicals and will produce a good show every year, notably varieties of *Acer palmatum* such as *Osakazuki*. Many plants never produce a good show, and others do well if given the correct conditions. Recently, nurserymen have been selecting and propagating more colourful forms of good autumn foliage trees and shrubs.

It is a well-known fact that many young actively growing trees and shrubs do not give off their best (colours) when almost all of the sugars produced are needed for growth. As soon as the growth rate settles down, they start producing more and better colours.

Sunny days followed by cool nights, below 45F, are needed for the best displays. Adequate moisture is needed to prevent premature leaf fall. The best garden site for these trees is an open site where the plants receive all sunlight possible, and cool nights. A slight ground frost will cool the air and encourage colour production.

Fall ^{is in} the AIR

THE LODERI STORY PART 3

(By John M. Hammond)

Whilst life in the Victorian era was considerably more leisurely, it was governed by strict formal codes of etiquette amongst the aristocracy and the country house set, something many present-day enthusiasts have great difficulty in comprehending. An invitation to dinner was usually the mechanism by which discussions could be facilitated, and sometimes that would lead to a walk around the grounds and an exchange of plant information. Plant hybridization was carried out under a veil of secrecy, as the status of a garden was measured by the rarity of the plants it contained, so current work with crosses would not be discussed, other than the results of crosses made at an earlier stage.

A second plant-hunting expedition took place in 1883, this time to the Dolomites where he and Marion sought alpine plants for the rock garden at Floore. In 1885, when the Amat, Corriemulzie and Glen Diebidale deer stalking leases terminated, Sir Robert Loder rented the Forest of Glenavon in Forfarshire from the Duke of Richmond, and continued the tenancy till his death in 1888. After Sir Robert's death Sir Edmund took places for himself; Kintail Forest, near Kyle of Lochalsh, was taken by him and his brother Reginald.

Edmund Loder's son, Robert Egerton Loder, was born on 27th July, 1887 and named after his grandfather, but known as 'Robin' amongst family and friends, and was never to know any other home than Leonardslee. For the last three years Edmund Loder was at Floore, from 1886 to 1888, he was on the Council of the Horticultural Society, and it was through love of gardening that he formed friendships with such men as the Rev. C. Wolley Dod, Sir Trevor Laurence, Sir Michael Foster and Sir Joseph Hooker. There are at least two highly appreciative entries in the Guest Book at Floore by Sir Joseph Hooker in regard to the gardens, expressing surprise at the numbers of plants in the collections and remarking on the charms of Floore. And so the years passed between Floore and Amat, with weeks spent in London or abroad, with visits to Whittlebury and to other country houses.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LEONARDSLEE WOODLAND GARDEN:



Garden of High Beeches

Sir Robert Loder, who passed away suddenly at the Beach House, Worthing on 27th May, 1888, was determined that his eldest son should be the leader of the Family, reside at Whittlebury, and inherit his title along with the bulk of the family fortune. There were seven brothers still extant, although one of the three daughters died at an early age. This in effect resulted in 'musical chairs' being played with the other Loder estates, as Floore was left to Sydney Loder; The High Beeches was left to Wilfred Loder; and the Beach House, purchased in 1878, was left to Sir Robert's wife, Maria. These arrangements did not meet with the approval of Sir Edmund who did not want to live at Whittlebury and perhaps had his eyes on The High Beeches in the more temperate climate of Sussex. Whilst the arrangements in Sir Robert's will were being discussed and enacted, in 1889 Sir Edmund purchased the 240 acre (100 he) Leonardslee estate from his ageing father-in-

law and this provided him with the opportunity to leave Northamptonshire and to return to his native Sussex. And, Leonardslee, his wife's old home just five miles from The High Beeches, became theirs to the end of his life.

When Sir Edmund left Floore in August, 1889 he did very much what Peter Beckford did with his harriers—"having thus got them perfect he parted with them"; Sir Edmund presented the whole of his cacti collection to the Royal Botanic Garden at Edinburgh, and changed his interests to trees and shrubs. Once he had made his mind up he was steadfast in his decisions and this enabled him to move on and not be concerned about what had gone before. Thirty-two years after, Professor Bayley Balfour writing to Lady Loder (January 1921) recalled:

"I have a most vivid recollection of the splendid collection of cacti, presented to us by Sir Edmund Loder, coming here. It was in the year after I came to Edinburgh and I find on looking up our records that there were 250 species of cacti and of other succulent plants in the gift—truly a sumptuous one and one that I valued very greatly because it really was the foundation of our collection. I am glad to tell you that nearly the whole of them are still alive and thriving here. Many of them of course have had to be propagated, the older plants dying out, but I can safely say that the gift is still the backbone of our collection. It has always been a very pleasant thought to me that Sir Edmund was so kind to us."

There must have been a period, previous to the 19th Century, when the district around Leonardslee suffered severely through the felling of its oaks for the Navy and the felling of timber more generally to provide charcoal for Sussex furnaces and foundries. But two hundred and fifty years had given time for the recovery from any desolation wrought by the iron industries. Such traces as survive of ironworking in the county add rather than detract from its valley scenery. The uninformed would never guess, for instance, that the chain of ponds and lakes in the main valley at Leonardslee, studded with gem-like nymphaea, reflecting gigantic-leaved gunnera and aquatic wonders of plant life along their borders, had been evolved out of the old "Hammer Ponds" — the ancient reservoirs which ensured the continual running of the water-wheels which drove the batteries of stamps which crushed the iron ore.to be continued next month.



The Leonardslee House

Tips 'n Bits...

For those who may be interested, we thought we would share a few tips to make life easier while gardening. If any other members have some ideas or suggestions to pass along, please feel free to send them along.

As we busy ourselves preparing our gardens for the dead of winter, be kind to you plants and afford them some winter cold protection. Although many trees and shrubs can be wrapped in burlap to help against the cold winter winds, the large leaf Gunnera plants need a different form of protection. As pictured here, our mature Gunnera can be protected by chopping of the leaves close to the stem, removing the stalk and inverting the leaves over the heart of the plant. As the leaves decompose over the winter, the process provides warmth and protection. They don't tend to turn to a slimy mush over time, but dry out and are burnable in the spring.



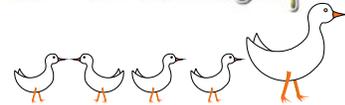
For those who could use a relatively simple cold frame, here's one that was constructed from scraps of 1/2 inch plywood and an old shower door. The door hinge isn't strong enough to support its weight for this application, so regular stainless hinges were screwed into the aluminum door frame as well as the wooden box frame work. Works great for those less than hardy, potted plants that need a little extra protection for the winter months.



When you are finished your fall cleanup of the garden, don't forget to clean your small garden tools, rakes and shovels, and sharpen secateurs and shovels before storing for the winter. Those with hinged parts, such as secateurs or pruners give them a squirt of WD 40 or silicone spray to keep them lubricated and ready to go for next spring. Finally, a handy way to carry your garden tools from place to place around your garden is to strap one (or doubled up) of those nursery trays to the handles of your wheelbarrow. We use a small bungee cord which works great. Doubled up, the tray keeps all your tools within easy reach. Just remember to remove them before dumping the contents of the wheelbarrow on the burn pile, or you'll be searching through all the clippings to find them.



From The Membership Chairman



A last reminder for all NRS members to renew their memberships before the end of November. Membership names have to be received at ARS head office before the end of November to ensure that you receive your winter (January) issue of the ARS 'Journal'. Be sure to bring your \$35 cheque or cash to the November 13th meeting, or mail to the address found on page 1 of this newsletter. Thank you.

The Maple Leaves Are Falling

There is before our window
A stand of Maple trees,
A feasting and a Trysting place
For many birds and bees.

The robins like to nest in them
The squirrels search for keys,
And we enjoy the shade they give
With their many thousand leaves.

Just now the leaves are falling
By ones, and twos and threes,
And sometimes by the dozens
When comes a vagrant breeze.

But God has ordered wisely
In the change the seasons bring,
And the glory of the Maples
Is seen in fall and spring.

.....Abridged J.W. Jenner

Recipe Requests

Quick Raisin Pudding

| | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 C Flour | 1 C raisins |
| 2 tsp BP | $\frac{1}{2}$ C Milk |
| 1/8 tsp salt | 1 C Brown sugar |
| 2 tsp sugar | 1 Tbsp butter |
| 2 Tbsp shortening | 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ C boiling water |

Heat oven to 375°F

Thoroughly grease a casserole (1 $\frac{1}{2}$ quart size). Mix together flour, BP and salt, add sugar. Cut shortening into small pieces and add to dry ingredients. Blend together with pastry blender until mixture is mealy. Add raisins, then gradually add milk, stirring lightly with fork. Mix only until blended. Turn batter into prepared bake dish. Mix brown sugar, butter and boiling water. Pour over batter and bake for 30 - 35 minutes. Serve warm with sauce from bake dish.

YIELD: 6 servings.

Quick Apple Pudding

Apple mixture:

| | |
|--------------------|---------------------------|
| 2 large apples | zest and juice of 1 lemon |
| 1/3 C caster sugar | 2 Tbsp water |

Sponge cake:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 $\frac{1}{3}$ C self-rising flour | 3 eggs |
| $\frac{3}{4}$ C soft butter | $\frac{3}{4}$ C caster sugar |
| 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp vanilla | |

Heat oven to 350°F

Thoroughly grease a casserole (1 $\frac{1}{2}$ quart size or 9" square). Peel, core and thinly slice apples. Put in a bowl and toss gently with remainder of apple mixture. Place in bottom of casserole dish

Mix together sponge cake ingredients with electric mixer for 1 minute.

Spread on top of fruit mixture and bake 40 - 45 minutes. Great served with custard.

**HAPPY
FALL**

Recipe can be used with several different fruits. The sponge bakes on top of the fruit and there is a delicious layer in the middle that can't quite decide if it is fruit or sponge. For a plum or apricot version replace 1/3 C of the flour with ground almonds, and scatter sliced almonds on the top.

Chocolate Pudding

Sauce:

| | |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| 3 C brown sugar | 3/4 C coca power |
| 2 tsp cornstarch | 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ C water |
| 1/2 C 35% cream | 1/2 tsp vanilla |

Cake:

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 C milk | 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ C flour, sifted |
| $\frac{1}{2}$ C cocoa | 1 tsp baking soda |
| 1 pinch salt | $\frac{1}{2}$ C unsalted butter |
| 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ C sugar | 2 eggs |

Sauce:

In a saucepan, combine the dry ingredients, add the water and cream. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly with a whisk. Add vanilla. Set aside.

Cake:

Rack in the middle position, preheat oven to 350'. Butter a 9x13 baking pan. In a small saucepan, bring the milk and coca power to a boil, whisking constantly. Let cool

Combine the flour, baking soda and salt. Set aside. In another bowl, cream the softened butter and sugar until the mixture resembles coarse, moist sand. Add eggs, beat until smooth. Now add the dry ingredients, alternating with milk mixture. Pour into baking dish, and gently pour the hot sauce over the dough. Bake until a toothpick inserted in the center of cake comes out clean, about 45 minutes. Serve hot or cold



Until Next Month
Noni