



The Rhodoteller

www.nirs.rhodos.ca

Happy New Year



2013

January

North Island Rhododendron Society

2012/2013 Executive

President

Paul Wurz287-4301

Vice-President/ Secretary

Pauline Thompson339-3423

Past President:

Diana Scott338-0208

Treasurer

Dave Godfrey335-0717

Director: Ways & Means

Nadine Boudreau339-0909

Director: Membership

Brian Staton337-5228

Director: Revenue Table

Chris Aldred335-3221

Director: Newsletter

Noni Godfrey335-0717

..... nonigod@shaw.ca

Social Committee:

Louise Casson334-2331

Publicity:

Helena Stewart339-1733

Sunshine Lady:

Nancy Munro334-3719

Library:

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

2nd January 2013-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 the Kingfisher). Right onto Kilmarnock, Chris is on the right hand side.

8th January 2013-Regular Monthly Meeting

A PowerPoint Presentation of.....

"Horticultural Wonders"

Our guest speaker this month is Leslie Cox – the author of a bimonthly gardening column, "Duchess of Dirt", appearing in the Comox Valley Record newspaper. She has also published several articles in magazines such as Canadian Living and Gardens West.

We are pleased to have her give us a presentation designed to showcase an eclectic mix of plant species that are guaranteed to be a delight in any garden. Offering some interesting ideas for landscaping and creating stunning plant combinations, this program is sure to have something for everyone.

Executive View



...by Paul Wurz

The Christmas party was a great end to a very successful year – a big thank-you to the executive for making it such a great success. Great food, wonderful entertainment, and some very interesting gifts were received by all. Dave's jeopardy was also a good lesson in humility!! We were also honored to have 6 of our associate members in attendance: the Wedemires (from Langley), the Murrays (from Cobble Hill), and the Webbs (from Victoria). A special thanks to Ken and Madeline for donating 7 rhododendrons to our club.

As most of you are aware we had four volunteers come forward to take over from Louise who did such a wonderful job over the past several years, thanks Louise! Jake, Claudia, Adrienne and Corrine will be taking over the kitchen and social duties.

In review, our club was involved in many activities over the past year. Hosting of the Whidbey Island rhodo club in May, organizing the District 1 meeting in August, and the well organized Saltspring Garden tour were amongst the highlights. Many of our members were also involved in the Nanaimo Regional Conference in September. The usual NIRS Garden tour and plant sale were all a great success.

Some exciting activities to look forward to in 2013 will be the Cowichan Valley garden bus tour on May 23rd, and hosting the Saltspring garden club on May 16th. NIRS will also be involved in the initial organization of the 2015 National Rhododendron Conference which will be held in Sidney. And finally, our annual AGM will be hosted by Pauline Thompson & Bob Eberle, and the June potluck will be at Paul & Lynn Wurzs.

Wishing all our members a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and will see you all on January 8th.



RING
OUT
the old



Raffle Rhodos

...by Diana Scott

Rhododendron 'Very Berry' developed by Harold Greer (1988) from his own hybrid 'Trude Webster' (seed parent) and 'Jean Marie de Montague' (pollen parent – van Nes and Sons) is another rhodo destined to become a majestic presence in the garden. Greer describes this showy rose-red hybrid as 'gigantic with magnificent perfectly cone-shaped trusses and large fir green leaves'. The leaves alone make a statement – often up to 10 inches long! A midseason bloomer, 'Very Berry' is one of the Great Plant Picks for northwest gardens and is sure to be a show stopper!



Rhododendron 'Hawaii' (unknown x unknown) is one of the many hybrids by Dr. David Leach of Ohio, brought out in 1967. Although its predominate flower colour is listed as red in the ARS plant listing, it is really a beautiful shade of dark purplish-pink with a yellow/green dorsal blotch. The flowers are openly funnel shaped with frilly edges held in dome shaped trusses. Floriferous and densely mounded, this plant will typically grow as wide as tall – around 3 -4 feet in 10 years. Calvin and Jeannie Parsons of Victoria have a couple of lovely photos of 'Hawaii' on the Hirsutum website – what a beautiful looking rhodo!



...by Dave Godfrey Member's Notes

WOW, wasn't that a party! Once again the executive committee outdid itself in providing another fabulous Christmas party on December 11th. By all reports, this was one of the biggest and best parties in the history of our club.

There were 64 members and guests in attendance - all bringing a scrumptious offering for the sweet and savoury dinner table. It was wonderful to see our new members **Brian & Cathy Storey** and **Shane Tillapaugh** in attendance, and to also have our associate members **Ken & Madeleine Webb**, **Garth & Sue Wedemire** and **Allan & Liz Murray** join us for the festivities.

Chris Aldred headed the committee again this year and, thanks to her diligent scouting of sales throughout the year, managed to find enough garden related gifts for Santa to hand out to everyone. Way to go, Chris!

Set-up of the hall began at 4 PM, with the walls decorated and tables and chairs readied for the door opening at 5:30 PM. Cider was brewed by **Noni Godfrey** and **Ruth Fowler**, while **Louise Casson**, **Claudia Ellis** and **Adrienne McNabb** prepared the coffee, tea and arranged the goodies as they arrived. **Diana Scott** and **Nancy Munro** made lovely centerpieces for all the tables, while **Lois Clyde** made and donated another wonderful wreath for display as our door prize. Thank you one and all for your wonderful contributions!

Brian Staton was kept busy at the registration desk taking dues payments from those still needing to renew for 2013. There were six regular memberships paid and two associates, bringing our combined total for 2013 to 65.



Law would come up with the correct answer for both? Must be the reason Don was the NIRS treasurer for so many years!



Godfrey. There was a lot of head scratching on some questions and bantering about some of the answers. But, once the answers for all 30 questions were marked and tallied, it was team "**Garth and his Harem**" (**Garth Wedemire** with 7 lucky ladies) that were the eventual winners with 27 points. Each received a scented festive candle as a prize.

Then it was time for Santa to distribute gifts. As ticket numbers were called, a random gift was delivered by one of our helper elves to each person in attendance. Even Santa and Mrs. Claus got a gift!

As a special surprise, **Jill Gould** found a small card inside her gift advising her that she was now the proud keeper of "Miss Piggy". Last year's caretaker of our prized porcine, **Nadine Boudreau**, gussied up "Miss Piggy" and presented her to Jill

for safekeeping and prominent display in her garden throughout 2013. This traditional 'passing of the pig' has been enjoyed by NIRS members since the mid-1990's with the names of each 'caretaker' written on her stomach.



Congratulations to everyone and a **BIG** thank you to all those members who helped make the party such a

Following the delicious dinner, tables were reorganized into teams of 8 with only some minor chaos, for the challenging Team Jeopardy game organized and run by **Dave & Noni**

To conclude the evening's festivities, draws were made for the door prizes with **Ann Chevrier** the lucky winner of the door wreath; **Allan Murray** won a gift box of Christmas coasters and **Sue Wedemire** won the floral centerpiece.

tremendous success. Photos of the evening's activities will be posted to our website in the New Year.



President Paul thanks the committee

BIG thanks also go out to all our members who so generously donated items for this year's hamper project.



Coordinator **Margaret Griffith-Cochrane** was overwhelmed by the generosity of our members in helping make some family's Christmas extra special, and she thanks everyone who gave support.

With the passing of yet another New Year, we return to our regularly scheduled programs. For our January 8th meeting, we will have a special presentation on "Garden Wonders" by the Comox Valley's "Duchess of Dirt", **Leslie Cox**. Leslie is a past president of the Comox Valley Horticultural Society and is co-owner/operator of "Growing Concern Nursery" in Black Creek.

Once again, **Chris Aldred** will be appreciative of any donations towards our Revenue Table, and **Nadine Boudreau** will be selling tickets on our lovely raffle prizes - the details of these rhodos are featured elsewhere in this newsletter. So don't forget to wear your name tag for an additional ticket, and we look forward to seeing you at the meeting!



Happy New Year

Winter's Here!

A Few Things to do in the Garden

... by Linda Derkach and Joan Rich
(reprinted from Dec 2012 MARS newsletter)

One of the reasons we love rhododendrons is that they look good all year round without a lot of work....at least not like so many other perennials and annuals in our gardens.

But there are a few things to think about now that winter is upon us....

- * If you have mulched your rhododendrons, remember to move the mulch away from the trunks, and don't let fallen leaves accumulate there to harbour bugs or encourage disease.
- * Make sure your rhododendrons are well watered before the really cold windy weather arrives; even during this very rainy fall, some areas of your garden may not have received a lot of rain - check areas under evergreen trees or under very large rhododendrons.
- * Conversely, make sure that you don't have water puddling around your rhododendrons - they like even moisture and good drainage.
- * If we get a big dump of snow, go out quickly to knock the snow off gently - starting with the lower branches of your shrubs and working upwards.
- * You can leave snow on slow growing or dwarf plants as a protective blanket, but make sure there is not a heavy snow load on large branches.
- * If you still have rhododendrons in smallish pots (and who doesn't), remember that they will freeze much more quickly than those snug in the ground.....so move them to an unheated garage or protected porch or cool greenhouse if we get a deep freeze.
- * Don't forget to water plants that you have under cover; they can dry out and die even in winter.

New Year's Resolution



THE LODERI STORY PART 5

...by John M. Hammond. (continued from the December Rhodoteller)

In the late 1800's the 'key' rhododendrons enthusiasts of the era, together with many famous rhododendron nurseries, made their own replica crosses of plants that had been exhibited, gained awards and were highly sought after by gentleman gardeners. Sir Edmunds was no exception in this regard and he endeavored to repeat the crosses using the best specimens of species and hybrids available. He was successful in creating better forms of several hybrids, but that's another story.

The following is taken from Sir Edmund Loder's own notes made in 1913 outlining the conditions under which he pursued his hobby of acclimatizing rare and beautiful plants and trees.

Leonardslee is 270 feet above sea-level; 9 miles from the northern slopes of the South Downs and 13 miles in a direct line to the sea near Shoreham. The ground planted occupies both sides of a valley running nearly north and south. It is partially sheltered from southwest gales by trees and by the configuration of the ground. The soil varies considerably in different parts, generally, however, containing sand, mixed more or less with clay. Geologically it is 'Upper Tunbridge Sand' and 'Cuckfield Clay.' The natural growth is heather, bracken and birch trees.

In 1913 he spent many, many hours reviewing the proof of his first publication, *List of Trees and Shrubs grown in the Open Air at Leonardslee*, a somewhat rare book of 122 pages, published by the Army and Navy Co-operative Society of London.

THE CREATION OF THE LODERI CROSS:

Throughout his life Sir Edmund had set himself complex problems to solve, with which he wrestled tirelessly, to the amazement of his close companions. He perceived that if rhododendrons were to be improved as garden plants some new strain must be introduced to create hybrids that would be good flowering shrubs. As was the case with his zoological studies and interests, what mattered for eventual success was that he spared no pains to obtain exceptional specimens of the various species with which to breed.

In 1901 he selected a particularly sweet-scented and large-flowered *R. fortunei* amongst the several he had, as the seed parent. But as he did not consider any of the *R. griffithianum* which he had were good enough, Sir Edmund sought to locate a better specimen of this species. He was fortunate to discover a particularly good form of *R. griffithianum* growing in a cold house, across the road from Leonardslee, in the South Lodge garden of Colonel Fred Godman, who kindly allowed him to take pollen from the plant back to Leonardslee. Dozens and dozens of seedlings were raised from this cross, and they proved to be vigorous growers, some with leaves a foot long.

The original cross was raised in three batches; twice *R. griffithianum* was the male parent, and once *R. fortunei*. Sixty to seventy per cent were successful when *R. griffithianum* was used. Only about twelve per cent were successful when the *R. fortunei* was the father, which the seedlings tended to replicate, so perhaps this was a genetic problem. The first plant to flower in 1907 at Leonardslee was 'White Diamond', producing a handsome truss with individual flowers 6 inches in diameter. Many of the seedlings at Leonardslee were named after members of the family, or personalities; those at The High Beeches were named after racehorses.

William Watson (1858-1922), Curator at R.B.G. Kew, came to visit and was much taken with the new seedlings; he suggested the name 'Loderi'. Some plants did not produce mature flowers and were not named until after Sir Edmund's death; amongst these was 'Loderi Sir Edmund', the last to bloom in 1921.



The best varieties are not necessarily those first named by Sir Edmund, but experience over many years suggests that in Britain the best are 'Loderi King George' (which carries 10 to 12 flowers, often 7 inches across), 'Loderi Sir Edmund' (immense pink, waxy flowers, retains pink in veins), 'Loderi White Diamond' (see notes above), 'Loderi Sir Joseph Hooker' (white, prominent pink veins), 'Loderi Pink Coral' (retains its lighter pink colour), 'Loderi Pink Diamond' (opens pink and quickly fades to greenish white), 'Loderi Game Chick' (opens pink and fades to white, flowers around a week later) and 'Loderi Venus' (opens pink and fades to blush, flowers around a week later). These latter two are useful for extending the flowering season of the grex and may be from the batch which had *R. fortunei* as the father.

Two later batches of crosses were made with the same parents post-1907 and prior to the death of Sir Edmund Loder in 1920; however, the progeny has never replicated the quality of the original 1901 cross, and actual dates of flowering and naming are unknown. At least six other hybridizes in the same era, and several key nurseries have made the same cross without obtaining the grand size and quality of the flowers in Sir Edmund's hybrid; whilst countless enthusiasts across the years have used *R. 'Loderi'* in their inter-grex crosses.

....To be continued in the next newsletter.

Christmas Cactus Care

Many of us have a Christmas cactus that may or may not bloom at the appropriate time of year. Some even bloom twice a year. The key to getting Christmas cactus to flower during the holiday season is proper light exposure; correct temperatures and limited watering. Here are some facts that should help you with the care of these plants.



Christmas cacti prefer a relatively cool night temperature between 55°F and 60°F. (13°-15.5°C) If the night temperatures are above 70°F (21°C) this inhibits flowering and causes bud drop. Place the plant in a well lighted location like a windowsill where it will receive bright but indirect light. Poor lighting also leads to bud drop and poor growth after the flowering.

Water thoroughly, but allow the plant to become moderately dry between watering. A Christmas cactus is a tropical cactus not a desert cactus. Unlike desert cacti, this variety cannot tolerate completely dry soil. If the soil gets too dry the flower buds will drop and the plant will wilt. Feel the soil and if it feels dry then it's time to water. Rain water that is left at room temperature is best. Soaking from the bottom is preferred method, but a light misting of the leaves can help.

Christmas cacti bloom best when somewhat pot-bound. Repotting is necessary only about once every three years and the best time for repotting is between February and April. Full sunlight is beneficial in mid-winter, but bright sunlight during the summer months can result in pale to yellowish foliage. The cacti require less water from October to March than when new growth is active (April to September.) Plants that are actively growing should be given a blooming house-plant fertilizer. Generally, it should be fertilized 2 to 4 times a year with a 20-20-20 feed, but stop feeding about a month before the buds appear; usually this means stop by the end of October.

Cacti will develop flower buds in the fall if the night temperature drops to 55°F (13°C). Where cool nights are not possible, cacti can be stimulated to flower by providing short days of 11 hours or less of light from mid-September to mid-October. This involves covering the plant with a light-tight box daily or moving to a dark location each night. Reduce watering and withhold fertilizer during the flower bud development and flowering stages will help produce the best results for your plants.



Wishing you a year where:
Dreams become a reality.
Success becomes routine.
And Happiness a habit.

ARS Journal Online: Handy and Accessible

ARS Journal Editor Glen Jamieson encourages us to access the journal on line. So, being curious, I went on line, and after completing the one-time registration process, found myself enjoying the gorgeous photos and interesting articles in brilliant colour and full screen. By using the step by step instructions on page 205 of the Fall issue of JARS, you should have the same success as me.

One thing you will need is your ARS Member Number that can be found in your Member's Booklet or on the paper wrapper of the Journal mailing label. Happy reading online!

January 2013 Goodie Gals:



Linda Billings - Ann Chevrier

Dorothy Law - Jill Gould



RECIPE REQUESTS

RASPBERRY-ALMOND SHORTBREAD COOKIES

Yield: about 36 cookies

Ingredients:

1 C butter, softened	2/3 C sugar
1/2 tsp almond extract	2 C flour
1/2 C red raspberry jam	Coarse sugar
1 C powdered sugar	2 - 3 tsp water
1 1/2 tsp almond extract	



Directions:

Beat butter on medium for 30 seconds. Beat in sugar and 1/2 tsp almond until combined. Beat in as much flour as you can with mixer, hand mix remaining flour. Cover, chill 1 hour or until dough is easy to handle. Preheat oven to 350°F. Shape dough into 1-inch balls 2 inches apart on ungreased cookie sheets. Using thumb, press indentation into center of each ball, spoon about 1/2 tsp jam into each. Sprinkle with coarse sugar. Bake approx 10 mins or until edges are light brown. Cool a minute, transfer to wire racks.

Icing:

In med bowl combine powdered sugar, 1 tsp of water, 1 1/2 tsp almond extract. Add remaining water slowly to make a drizzling consistency. Drizzle over cookies.