



# The Rhodoteller

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



FEBRUARY

## North Island Rhododendron Society

2013/2014 Executive

**President**

Paul Wurz ..... 287-4301

**Vice-President**

Jake Ellis ..... 337-8516

**Past President/Director:**

Diana Scott ..... 338-0208

**Secretary**

Adrienne McNabb ..... 898-8712

**Treasurer**

Dave Godfrey ..... 335-0717

**Director: Ways & Means**

Dick Bonney ..... 339-7594

**Director: Membership**

Brian Staton ..... 337-5228

**Director: Revenue Table**

Chris Aldred ..... 335-3221

**Newsletter**

Noni Godfrey ..... 335-0717

..... nonigod@shaw.ca

**Social Committee:**

Claudia Ellis ..... 337-8516

**Publicity:**

Helena Stewart..... 339-1733

**Sunshine Lady:**

Nancy Munro..... 334-3719

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



## Coming Events

4th February 2014 - Executive Meeting 2:00 pm

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

11th February 2014 - Regular Monthly Meeting

### A PowerPoint Presentation of.... "From Rhodos to Rock Gardens"

Dany Fortin and Shane Tillapaugh will give a presentation on the merits of rock gardens in our dry summer, wet winter climate here in the North Island region. They will explain why Rhodo gardeners may enjoy rock gardening and touch upon the symptoms of Plant Collector's Syndrome. Dany will discuss rock gardens and some of the plants for shady locations, while Shane will examine rock gardens for sun.



## President's View

...by Paul Wurz

It's a bit "nippy" out there [this morning](#), so a good opportunity to sit at the computer. Our wonderful weather continues, but we must remember that we are still in the middle of winter!

North of Campbell River, in spite of having daffodils several inches tall, hellebores starting to bloom, and snow drops already blooming, we could still be a long way from spring. I can remember 3 or 4 years ago when the daffodils had buds in late January, but they never came into bloom until mid-April. We certainly should not wish for a super early spring, as this could put our rhododendron buds at risk.

So what is happening in the garden? It's always an interesting time if you have relatively new rhodo plants in the garden, as they are setting up buds for the first time – hopefully you will be pleasantly surprised and not bitterly disappointed when they eventually bloom. If you researched your plants carefully, you should not be disappointed!

Although it may be a bit early to do some planting, we have created a few new beds here at 'Hidden Acres' that will be ready to plant in a month or so, weather permitting. With this pleasant weather, it is tempting to do some pruning and fertilizing, but it is probably best to hold off for a short time yet.

Raking leaves and cleaning up the beds is a great way to get some exercise and fresh air at this time of year. There are always lots of opinions on whether or not old rhodo leaves should be collected. Time permitting, I do rake and compost as many as possible – always an opportunity to do a bit of weeding and clean-up pruning at the same time. It is important to move carefully through your garden as many of those elusive bulbs are starting to poke through the mulch.

Unfortunately, Lynn and I will miss Shane and Dany's presentation at the meeting on [February 11<sup>th</sup>](#) as we will be in California welcoming the new arrival of another grandchild. The meeting will be a good opportunity for Vice President Jake Ellis to get his feet wet. Thanks Jake!! I hope that all is going well with our members and that many of you can make the February meeting.

## Raffle Rhodos

...by Dick Bonnev

### PINK CAMEO

Pink Cameo Rhododendron is a cross of Boule de Neige and catawbiense, red form. It was hybridized by Shammarello. As the name suggests it produces lovely pink funnel-shaped blossoms about 2 ½" across, with lighter centre and a pinkish yellow flare. The trusses are conical shaped. Bloom time is late midseason. This elepidote plant grows to 5 feet in 10 years. Hardy to -20F. The leaves are mid green in colour and are about 4½" long. This soft pink flower mixes well with most colours, especially purple, example Dorothy Amateis, and white such as Sapporo.



The second raffle this month will be for a special basket put together by Dick Bonney in honour of his "birth month", as he puts it. He tells me the basket will have an "unknown rhodo", and a "bunch of other goodies."

Tickets as always \$1.00 each or 3 for \$2.00

Wear your North Island Rhododendron Society name badge and receive an extra ticket with your purchase.



## Members' Notes

...by Pauline Thompson

**President Paul Wurz** welcomed everyone back, wishing all a very happy New Year, with no complaints of snowy roads and cold weather this year. Days have been warm and everyone is noticing the daffs are coming up. Paul reminded the group that the Rhododendron Species Foundation is celebrating its 50th anniversary on April 25 and 26 with special events and guest speakers planned. The early deadline has been extended from February 1<sup>st</sup> to March 1<sup>st</sup>. More information can be found at: <http://rhodygarden.org/cms/>

**Bernie Guyader** advises that the 'Sunshine Coast Botanical Garden', located at 5941 Mason Road in Sechelt, was the recent recipient of 28 rhododendrons from the collection of **Alleyne Cook** of North Vancouver. As a member of the Vancouver RS chapter, Alleyne Cook was also instrumental in transferring some of the Greig Rhododendrons to Stanley Park and Van Dusen Gardens in Vancouver many years ago

**Pauline Thompson** reviewed the fire exit regulations with the members and guests, indicating the two primary exits located towards the front of the hall. She asked everyone to take a moment during the break to familiarize themselves with them and noted that going through the kitchen, and storage rooms would not lead to an exit.

Paul expressed his thanks to **Dave & Noni Godfrey** for again producing the Members' Yearbook, and noted that it was available through **Jake Ellis**.

**Ann Chevrier** and **Fran Thornton** promoted the revenue table on behalf of **Chris Aldred**. Fran's enthusiastic presentation on the magazines resulted in the sale (disposal) of a great many; or maybe it was her threat that no one was leaving the hall without a few copies! Having distributed the bulk of them, Chris has asked that members no longer donate more magazines for the near future.

Attendance for Diana Scott's Members' Gardens presentation was very good with 54 members and two guests (**Aji Fliiss** and **Naomi Chester**) in attendance. Membership Chair **Brian Staton** noted that our current membership stands at 75 with 69 members and 6 associates.

Guest **Aji Fliiss** was invited to tell the group about her upcoming garden tour through the Cotswold's and Downton Abbey. Only a few spaces are available for the April 6-16 tour at a cost of \$2498 per person, not including airfare.

**Jake Ellis** reported that the May 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Rhodo Sale and Show is well underway and soon there will be a call for volunteers. **Adrienne McNabb** and **Diana Scott** have now confirmed all the gardens for this year's Mother's Day Garden Tour. They include a nice mix of small, medium, and large gardens presented by **Wilf & Gail Abel**, **Robert Argall**, **Dick Bonney**, **Antje & Peter Guertler**, **Becci & Keith Russell**, **Bob & Adela Smith** and **Fran Thornton**.

For the Show & Tell, **Diana Scott** brought a variety of scented flowers that are in early bloom in her garden and **Summer Joy** provided a short educational on the advantage of catching those currently active brown slugs. Seems that they can be tempted with a few kale leaves on the ground and then disposed of before they get into full reproduction mode.

Our lucky raffle winners were **Linda Billings**, not taking home the absent rhodo 'Holden', but looking forward to collecting it soon, and **Louise Casson** winning the NIRS bag. While **Corrine Innes** won the door prize of the book, 'The Rhododendron Story.'



**Diana Scott's** presentation of NIRS Gardens Throughout the Seasons was truly masterful. She was able to take hundreds of photos provided by members and weave them into a wonderful tale of transformation both by the change of seasons and the hard work of the gardeners. She told stories about the plants, the people and took the audience on a virtual

tour through a seemingly endless garden vista. Her leisurely pace and clever juxtaposition of images and moments gave us a tranquil evening of anticipation of spring. The gardens we visited included those of (in no particular order): **Ron Cameron**, **Jill Gould & Dave Dubreck**, **Noni & Dave Godfrey**, **Adrienne & Robert McNabb**, **Ross & Nancy Munro**, **Bernie & Gloria Guyader**, **Dick Bonney**, **Ann Chevrier**, **Robert Argall**, **Louise & Roger Casson**, **Brian & Barb Staton**, **Art & Susan Lightburn**, **Summer Joy & Jim Webb**, **Dany Fortin & Jaime Willms**, **Becci & Keith Russell**, **Nadine & Gerry Boudreau**, **Don & Dorothy Law** and, of course, **Diana & John Scott**. Thank you Diana! Well done.

Next month, we look forward to another member presentation by two of our younger members, "From Rhodos to Rock Gardens." **Dany Fortin** and **Shane Tillapaugh** will give a presentation on the merits of rock gardens in our dry summer, wet winter climate to the North Island Rhododendron Society club meeting on February 11, 2014. They will explain why rhododendron gardeners may enjoy rock gardening and touch upon the symptoms of Plant Collectors Syndrome. Dany will discuss rock gardens and some of the plants for shade locations; while Shane will examine rock gardens for sun. Be prepared with your questions for this knowledgeable pair.



# GARDENING



With Jill

...by Jill Gould



## Zone three: the Cariboo

I am a Coastie, having been raised in Delta, and still display the webbing between my toes to prove it. When my new husband took on a new job, I viewed it in the adventurous spirit of a young bride, and cheerfully moved with him to the Cariboo.

After a few months we had an opportunity to buy a house. Not much of one, I admit, but we had stars in our eyes and lots of energy. The thing which struck me after we moved in was that the previous owners, another young couple, had never done any landscaping. The one-acre lot was lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta latifolia*) and rocks, with a driveway to park the vehicles. (Nobody in the Cariboo, which gets very cold snowy winters, ever had a garage or carport, and I have never figured out why not. Cowboy mentality?)

I was lucky enough to land a job as a first aid attendant at the local sawmill, which meant shift work, but hey, I was young and strong, and the money was good. On my days off, I would be out in the "front yard" with a pickaxe, shovel and pry bar, trying to get a vegetable garden dug. My neighbours shook their heads. "It's too cold here, and you'll get frosts even in summer. That's if the range cattle don't eat everything." None of them had gardens, and heck, few even had what you would call "landscaping". Cowboy mentality, again! My Dearly Beloved and I scrounged pine poles from the bush and built a rail fence, and our dogs were tasked with chasing the cows away. The cows were not impressed and usually ignored them, and made deposits in the driveway.

Of course, my weirdness soon became readily apparent: Female sawmill worker and persistent gardener, often seen in my front yard (the only level spot) wielding a pickaxe and emitting karate yells as I attacked the tenacious roots of scrubby willows, which seemed to go to China. It provided entertainment for neighbours driving by, gawking and shaking their heads.

There was literally no topsoil on the lot. The area had been volcanic at one time, and there was hardly any organic matter. Any soil that had been there was scraped to one side by the builder and the house plunked on top of it! The rest of the lot sloped down to the road. Well, we had one advantage: Lots of manure. There were horses, cows, sheep and even chickens. Always providing you had a truck, a shovel and lots of muscle.



The only way we could grow vegetables was the raised bed method. We built a log crib, starting small the first year: Ten by ten feet. I went around to friends who lived in the nearest town and who had lawns (which we certainly did not) and begged their grass clippings. I raked up aspen leaves. I raked up *other people's* aspen leaves. I rapidly developed a reputation for being eccentric. My husband's job provided him with a pickup truck, and we made the rounds of local ranches. Manure, leaves, grass clippings, any topsoil we could buy (and it wasn't readily available) all went into the log frames.

Believe it or not, it worked. Earthworms magically appeared and started to work. We had onions, carrots, beans, peas and potatoes. Unfortunately, little beige slugs also appeared. Now, coastal slugs are big enough to warrant use of a 410 shotgun, but these little devils were sly. Never more than one inch long, they hid under the log frame of my garden and ventured out at night to munch on tender seedlings. How I ended up coping with this was, I thought, ingenious. In the spirit of recycling, I dug around the logs, scraped the slugs out with a trowel, plopped them into an ice cream bucket, and delivered them to my neighbour's chickens, which gobbled them up. My neighbour then presented me with some of the eggs. See? Recycling.

I love scarlet runner beans. Every year I would construct a pole trellis and plant runner beans, and nearly every year the frost would get them in August. I think we had a crop two years out of twelve. I'd plant seeds, and two leaves would come up, and then the plants would just sit there. Finally, with hot August days, they'd start to flourish. I would come home at 1 a.m. from afternoon shift, and just KNOW that it was nearly freezing. I'd run around in the dark throwing plastic over the garden, but in the morning, the runner bean leaves would be blackened. Lesson: Scarlet runners are a subtropical vine, need heat to grow and can't stand frost! The rufous hummingbirds, however, loved the flowers.

Consequently, I never tried tomatoes outdoors. We built a lean-to greenhouse on the south side of the house and grew the tomatoes and cucumbers inside it. This greenhouse was a contraption made of recycled materials scrounged from other people's abandoned greenhouses, and looked atrocious. But it worked. I even had a toad move in; grateful no doubt for the additional warmth.

In the 1970's the back-to-the-land movement must have hit the Cariboo, and everyone with five acres built a greenhouse. By the 1980's, these structures had deteriorated into weathered lumber and flapping flags of ripped plastic sheeting. Plastic is not for the Cariboo. The extremes of weather, 40 below in winter, and 35 above in summer, were too much; besides which the concept of UV resistant poly

sheeting (which might have lasted) was alien to the Cowboy Mentality. The stuff cost more, and besides, plastic is plastic, right? The wife wanted a greenhouse, so there it is, dang it. Now go away and let me clean my rifle.

Consequently, with permission, we were able to remove some of these structures and build our own greenhouse. It had acrylic panels on it, which enabled the snow to slide off without damaging the roof.

My serious successes were plants which produced their crop underground: carrots, potatoes, onions, radishes. The soil protected them from sneak attacks by Jack Frost. Broad beans did well. My failures were the above-mentioned runner beans, and horseradish, which did *too* well and started ramping through the whole garden. Likewise Jerusalem Artichokes, a sunflower species which produces edible tubers. Once planted it refused to give notice and vacate!

Flowers were problematic. Even in planters, "annuals" were apt to get frostbitten. I did well with Siberian Irises, Delphiniums, Bergenia and other hardy perennials. The greatest success was just encouraging the native plants: Heart-leaf arnica, Columbia lilies, Indian Paintbrush, lupins, *Rosa nutkana*, little purple violets and *Clematis columbiana*. One could pick bouquets fit for a florist shop just by wandering the roadside in May and June.

My best friend across the road, mother of two small children, decided to garden too. She came from Vancouver where there *are* gardens so she didn't know any better. She insisted on planting Hybrid Tea Roses every spring, and mourning the demise of last year's roses. She scornfully ripped out the healthy potentilla bushes (Zone 2) that grew by her house in the only sunny spot to make room for these roses, and planted corn on a north-facing slope shaded by the house. Well, hope springs eternal. I did not have the heart to say anything, so we remained friends. I just made sure I never gave her any plants for her garden, because this gal had the brownest thumb you can imagine.

By the time we moved back to the Coast, my little log-frame vegetable bed had the best soil in the South Cariboo. I have no idea whether the new owner of our house planted a vegetable garden, but I heard a rumour that the greenhouse became a shelter for his snowmobile.

Friendship  
Warms the heart

Tidbits



"Delightful Gardens, Downton Abbey, & Heart of England" Tour! Local travel agent Aji Fliss is organizing a small group (tour max 15) English Garden Tour for April 6 - 16, 2014 which includes all entrances, tours, sightseeing, several meals and accommodation. (Double Occupancy: \$2498 CAD per person; Single Occupancy add \$590/pp; Deposit: \$500/pp.) Looks like a great tour! For more details contact Aji Fliss #250.898.3358; [afliss@shaw.ca](mailto:afliss@shaw.ca)

### Pruning Roses:

An old expression...Prune your rose bushes when the forsythia is in bloom. A good thing to keep in mind real soon!

### Cowichan Valley Rhododendron Society:

Hosting Redwoods, Rhodos, Wine and West Coast Tour to the northern California coast and the southern Oregon area, from 07 - 12 May 2014. For those who may be interested there are a lot more details available in the document attached with this newsletter.

"One month is past, another is begun,  
Since merry bells rang out the dying year,  
And buds of rarest green began to peer,  
As if impatient for a warmer sun;  
And though the distant hills are bleak and dun;  
The virgin snowdrop, like a lambent fire,  
Pierces the cold earth with it's green-streaked spire.  
And in dark woods, the wandering little one  
May find a primrose."

'Feb. 1st 1842....Hartley Coleridge

### Feb 2nd is Candlemas Day

"If Candlemas Day be fair & bright  
Winter will have another flight;  
But if Candlemas Day be clouds & rain  
Winter is gone and will not come again!"

(From The Country Diary of An Edwardian Lady.... Edith Holden)

# RECIPE REQUESTS

## SHRIMP STEW WITH COCONUT MILK, TOMATOES & CILANTRO

(Judi Murakami)

- 3 lb. jumbo (21 to 25 per lb.) shrimp, peeled and deveined
- Kosher salt
- 2 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 large red bell pepper, sliced into very thin 1½ inch-long strips
- 4 scallions, thinly sliced (white and green parts kept separate)
- ½ C chopped fresh cilantro
- 4 large cloves garlic, finely chopped
- ½ to 1 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
- 14.5 oz. can petite-diced tomatoes, drained
- 13.5 or 14 oz. can coconut milk
- 2 Tbsp. fresh lime juice

In a large bowl, sprinkle the shrimp with 1 tsp. salt; toss to coat, and set aside.

Heat the oil in a 5 to 6 quart Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add the bell pepper and cook, stirring, until almost tender, about 4 minutes. Add the scallion whites, 1/4 cup of the cilantro, the garlic, and the pepper flakes. Continue to cook, stirring, until fragrant, 30 to 60 seconds.

Add the tomatoes and coconut milk and bring to a simmer. Reduce the heat to medium and simmer to blend the flavors and thicken the sauce slightly, about 5 minutes.

Add the shrimp and continue to cook, partially covered and stirring frequently, until the shrimp are just cooked through, about 5 minutes more. Add the lime juice and season to taste with salt. Serve sprinkled with the scallion greens and remaining 1/4 cup cilantro.

## February Goodies

Linda Billings - Aji Fliss  
Margaret Griffith-Cochrane  
Arlene Hooper - Mo Shipton

## BANANA FLAX BREAD

(Judi Murakami)

- 3 ripe bananas
- 1 C AP flour
- 1 C whole-wheat flour
- 2 Tbsp ground flax seeds (optional)
- 1 tsp baking soda
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ C unsalted butter (room temp)
- ¾ C packed brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 2 Tbsp dark rum (optional)
- 2 tsp vanilla
- ½ C semi-sweet choc chips
- ½ C chopped walnuts

Oven to 350F. Oil a 9 x 5-in. loaf pan. Mash bananas should measure about 1 1/2 cups. Stir both flours with ground flax seeds, baking soda and salt in a medium bowl. Large bowl beat butter and sugar until combined, beat in eggs, rum and vanilla. Stir in bananas. Hand stir in flour mixture just until combined. Do not over mix. Gently fold in chocolate chips and walnuts. Scrape batter into prepared pan. Smooth top.

Bake in centre of oven until a cake tester comes out clean, 50 to 65 min. Cover loosely with foil for the last 15 min if top browns too quickly. Remove pan to a rack to cool for 10 min. remove from pan to rack to finish cooling.

## TERYAKI CRANBERRY SAUCE FOR MEATBALLS OR ROAST PORK

(Judi Murakami)

- 1/3 C Golden Dragon Thick Teriyaki sauce
- 2/3 C whole cranberry sauce
- May add ginger and garlic (powdered ginger, grated ginger, fresh chopped garlic, bottled garlic, garlic salt, etc. to taste)
- I usually add 1 garlic clove chopped and 1tsp. grated ginger.
- Heat ingredients together and pour over roast pork 30 minutes before it's done with the drippings, or if using with meatballs, you can put cooked meatballs into the sauce.

Until Next Month  
Aloha  
Noni

