



The Rhodoteller

www.nirs.rhodos.ca



March

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 March 2014 - Executive Meeting 2:00 pm

The executive meeting will be held at the home of Brian and Barb Staton, 1524 Seaview Road, Black Creek. Seaview is in the Miracle Beach area. From Courtenay/Comox go north on the Island Highway, turning onto Miracle Beach heading towards the park. As you approach the park, keep 'right' don't go into the parking lot! If you keep going you will end up on Seaview Rd, which is on the other side of the Park.

11th March 2014 - Regular Monthly Meeting

A PowerPoint Presentation of....

"The Evolution of the Rhododendron"

Our March speaker is Dr. Glen Jamieson from the Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society (MARS) and current Editor of the Journal of the American Rhododendron Society (JARS). Dr. Jamieson has been a research scientist with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and continues to have a keen interest in biology, and in gardening! He is successfully growing tender vireyas, as well as more hardy rhododendrons. He is an active member in our District and across the ARS. Dr Jamieson will speak with us about how rhododendron species may have developed across a widely separated geographical area – some in North America, others in Europe, but now more particularly in south-east Asia. What were and are the factors that have influenced the development and distribution of the rhododendron that we know today? Using published material, Dr. Jamieson will share a hypothesis to explain rhododendron speciation and help us better understand 'The Evolution of the Rhododendron'!

President's View

...by Paul Wurz

Well, as I write this, the snow has finally stopped falling with approximately 18 to 20 inches of wet snow weighing heavily on our poor rhododendrons! It will be interesting to see how many of the plants will have a different look when the snow finally disappears – I expect that this is nature's way of controlling their size. With a little luck, there may not be too much damage! As I am sitting at my computer, I can see mini-avalanches tumbling down from the over-laden trees as the sun is finally having some effect.

There won't be much going on in our garden for the next week or two since, with no significant rain in the forecast, it will probably take a long time for the snow to disappear. Any thought of getting some fertilizer on the plants or finishing the spring clean-up will have to be put on hold for now. In hindsight, we should have stayed another 10 days in Thousand Oaks, California, where we welcomed another new granddaughter – the weather there was perfect.

From what I hear, Dany & Shane did an excellent presentation last month. It was disappointing that we could not attend. Also, thank-you to Vice President Jake for chairing the meeting and for attending the recent 2015 Convention planning meeting in Victoria; from all reports, plans are going well.

With spring approaching, comes the busiest time of the year for all NIRS members. Our annual Plant Sale and Garden Tour events are fast approaching – an opportunity to get involved. Also, our AGM and elections are just around the corner. There are a few individuals stepping down from our Board of Directors, so we will be looking for volunteers to step in and take over.

On behalf of our members, I would like to extend a hearty welcome to Garth Wedemire and wife Sue to the Comox Valley. They will be moving to their new home in Comox in late March. Garth has been a long-time rhodo enthusiast in the Fraser Valley for many years. He was the recent recipient of the ARS Silver Medal for his contributions to all chapters in District One. Welcome Garth & Sue!!

Looking forward to seeing many of our members at the March 11th meeting!

Raffle RHODOS

...by Dick Bonney

Our raffle rhodo for the March meeting will be... (loud trumpets)... "GARTENDIREKTOR GLOCKER." (What a hell of a name!) A nice compact plant that grows to only 4 feet in 10 years; likes sun; has pink flowers with darker edges, and is a cross of 'Doncaster' by R. williamsianum. Would be a very nice plant for some lucky winner... remember to wear your NIRS name tag for an extra ticket when purchasing others!



Single truss

GARTENDIREKTOR GLOCKER



Second prize for some lucky winner will be... THE AMAZING PRESTO BUCKET! This is a flat canvas bucket handy to have for all gardeners, boaters or R.V. owners. This lightweight, yet durable, bucket opens from a one and a half inch zippered state to a 2 gallon watertight bucket. WOW!



Irish Blessings

*May your blessings outnumber
the shamrocks that grow.
And may trouble avoid you
wherever you go.*



...by Pauline Thompson

Member's Notes

PCS – the latest plant problem to hit the Comox Valley was discussed at length at our February meeting. Do YOU have it? Can it be cured? But wait... that will come later!

As *Membership Chair Brian Staton* announced, there were 44 members and one guest in attendance for our February 11th meeting. We welcomed two new members *Aji Fliss* and *Eveline Rawcliff* for joining our chapter. Our regular memberships now total 71, plus 6 associate memberships.

However, there was a distinct absence of the usual familiar faces at the meeting. So we enjoyed all the new ones! *Vice President Jake Ellis* took the chair in the absence of *President Paul Wurz*, while *Pauline Thompson* covered for *Secretary Adrienne McNabb*, *Claudia Ellis* covered for *Treasurer Dave Godfrey* and collected the evening's income. *Ann Chevrier* and *Fran Thorton* filled in for *Chris Aldred* covering the revenue table, and *Pauline* popped up again and did a fair impersonation of *Diana Scott* as the introducer of the evening's program. *Noni Godfrey* was 'virtually' present, as she had prepared and distributed the newsletter and made sure that there were copies available at the meeting.

Fortunately *Brian Staton*, *Ruth Fowler*, *Nadine Boudreau*, *Lois Clyde* and of course *Dick Bonney* were all present and accounted for at their rightful stations. The goodie table was overflowing with tasty treats supplied by *Arlene Hooper*, *Mo Shipton*, *Lynda Billings*, *Margaret Griffith-Cochrane* and *Aji Fliss*. Thank you ladies! We were certainly prepared to reward ourselves for coming out on a blustery night.

VP *Jake* whizzed through the business part of the meeting in record time and we moved along to the 'Show and Tell'. *Dick Bonney* gave his usual erudite description of a 'dead brown thing', and then *Nadine Boudreau* appeared from the kitchen announcing "Our show and tell this evening is not a plant, but he has many characteristics of plants:

Like a berberis - a bit Prickly

Like a Crabapple - Crabby

Like a Corylus Contorta - a little Twisted

But to us he is a Rose among thorns...

Happy Birthday, Dick!"



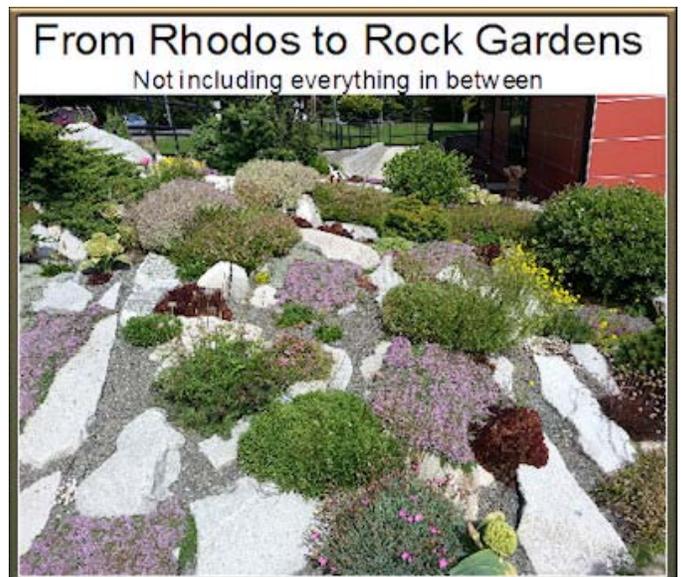
This was followed by the presentation of a surprise

birthday cake and balloon.



The raffle draw was a sad looking R. 'Pink Cameo', but fortunately was won by *Nadine Boudreau*, who promised to take it home and nurture it. In celebration of his "birth month", as he put it, *Dick Bonney* made up an amazing gift basket that included 6 homemade fresh buns, 3 kinds of cheese, 3 homemade jams, 3 tins of fish, 2 tins of meat, assorted teas, coffee, 3 bottles of wine, a chocolate bar and to top it off a Christmas tree ornament of a garden helper! All beautifully wrapped up in a large wicker basket. And the lucky winner was *Claudia Ellis*

Finally...the event we had all been waiting for: 'From Rhodos to Rock Gardens' (but not everything in between!) The presenters are two well-known NIRS members, *Dany Fortin* and *Shane Tillpaugh* and as it turned out there was a lot more to know about them.



Dany has worked in the horticulture field for 16 years including landscaping and tree care. He is an ISA Certified

Arborist and Tree Risk Assessor. During his year at Kew Gardens working on large projects, he was also responsible for maintaining the Caprifoliaceae and Oleaceae collections. Locally, Dany helped to create the 'No. 6 Mine Park' in Cumberland, has spent three seasons working on the Filberg Park and is the creator of the beautiful rock gardens located at the Comox Rec Centre and the Marina. The Town of Comox is lucky to have him as a member of the Parks Department.

Shane is a gardener and a naturalist who, as he puts it, "loves birdies, bees, plants and trees". He began his career in the gardening/landscaping industry in Victoria after graduating in 2004 with a BSc in Honours Biology from U Vic. Through Gaia College, he earned the designation of Ecological Landscape Designer and Certified Organic Land Care Professional. He is also an ISA Certified Arborist and Tree Risk Assessor. Shane ran his own gardening/landscape company, 'Eco Island Landscapes', for seven years and is currently a horticulturalist in the Parks Department of the City of Courtenay. Shane will also be teaching the Soil Science and Plant Health modules of the landscaping Horticulture Apprenticeship program at North Island College this spring.

Both gentlemen have admitted to having severe cases of PCS (Plant Collector's Syndrome), and confess this is why they are such avid rock gardeners. They can boast of inserting dozens of tiny slow growing plants into the multitude of crevices in their respective rock gardens. Interestingly, these plants have enormously long Latin names and easily surpass rhodos in name complexity. Shane and Dany glide through the pronunciations as though they were reciting romantic poetry; their eyes glisten, a smile on their lips.



These characteristics, by the way, are symptoms of PCS, in case you are wondering if you have it. **Bernie Guyader** seems to be as infected as Shane and Dany; both deferred to him throughout the presentation, and admitted that

Bernie is one of the suppliers of their habit.

The joint slide show and commentary was rich in suggestions on how to nurture this syndrome. Members scrambled to write down the names of suggested plants. Here are some of them in case you missed them:

Acantholimon Abies Buxus Daphne, Aquilegia jonesii, Astragalus purshii, Convolvulus compactus, Edraianthus pumilio, Lewisia rediviva, Lewisia cotyledon, Penstemon davidsonii subsp. menziesii, Penstemon fruticosus, and of course, the tiny small leafed rhododendrons that can accompany these plants.

There is an outstanding list of dwarf rhodos taken from 'Dwarf Rhododendrons' by Virginia Jefferis published in a January 1963 article in the ARS Journal located at <http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JARS/v17n1/v17n1-jefferis.htm>

Shane and Dany assembled hundreds of outstanding pictures of rock gardens and plants. (Photographing plants is another sign of PCS). They take their inspiration from the gardens of folks like Paul Sprigg and Bernie Guyader, as well as from nature. Their hiking trips into the local mountains always show them some outstanding examples of nature's rock gardens.



Kiss Me, I'm Irish!

Happy Saint Patrick's Day!

Eat, Drink, and be IRISH!

A wonderful presentation that left us all thinking that there were a few spots in our gardens that could absorb some rocks and a tiny R. Wren, a few sedums and maybe just one little purple Edraianthus pumilio and Rock Garden Inspirations.





Compulsive photography is one sign of PCS!



Shane demonstrated another example of severe PCS.



Tidbits...

If you have any ornamental grasses, now is the time to cut them back before the new growth begins as the temperature begin to warm. Pampas grass can be cut back and divided if it is getting too large. Some gardeners burn their pampas grass, but this is not recommended as too much heat can kill the growth core.

Save time and money by planting your seeds this month and, if possible, place them under grow lights in a warm location. You do not need to purchase the expensive "grow" lamps for a 48 inch portable fixture. One 'warm white' bulb and one 'cool white' bulb at regular prices will provide the same full light spectrum as any expensive aquarium/grow bulb.

Roses should be pruned by mid-month and fruit trees should be done early in the month, if not already done.

This is the ideal time to re-mulch your garden beds, before herbaceous perennials start to emerge. Ideal mulches would be fish compost, garden compost or well rotted manure.

This is the best time of year to divide perennials. For perennials, such as Hosta, Astilbe and many others, it is very easy to see the new growth tips which will make it easy to divide.

Deadhead and feed spring bulbs when they finish flowering.

If you need to move rhodos, trees or other shrubs this is a good month to do it, taking care to move as much

of the root ball as possible and watch for the entire year to make sure that the newly moved plants do not dry out.

Remove any winter mulches that were applied to tender plants.

Get on top of weeding this month as many perennial weeds have continued to grow over winter and are getting ready to set seed.

After all is said and done, March is a guessing game in the garden. Will it warm up soon? Will it stop snowing or raining? About the only thing we can count on is that March too shall pass. Push the envelope, but keep the row covers handy!

MILNER GARDENS & WOODLAND



Milner Gardens Bunny Trail April 18th through April 21st

Bring the children or grandchildren for a children's Easter Bunny search taking place in the Gardens. At the Welcome & Interpretive Centre, children can pick up maps for clues to finding the bunnies, and then return the map to the Pool House Gift Shop to receive an Easter treat.

Free admission for children 12 and under accompanied by an adult.

Gates open - 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Tea Room - open 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. for tea, scones and soup.

For more info 250-752-6153 or www.milnergardens.org

Milner Gardens opens for the season April 3rd, Thursday through Sunday and Easter Monday.



A Better Image

...by Eleanor Philp

ARS Silver Medal Award winner in 2002

We honour the legacy of one of the grand ladies of rhododendrons and of photography – Eleanor Philp, of the Noyo Chapter, who passed away in her 87th year in February 2012. Reprinted in the Whidbey Island Newsletter and we share it now with our readers.

When I pick up my camera to photograph for the day, I feel certain that this time I will get 'A BETTER IMAGE.' The equipment I decide to use at any given time depends on my plans for that day. For me there is not just one camera, or one lens that would be right for all jobs.

EQUIPMENT: Know your equipment. This ranks at the top of my list of rules. Take time to study your camera, including the lenses and accessories. When you become familiar with these pieces, they treat you like old friends, doing their best for you.

COMPOSITION RULES: Composition rules are not hard and fast but rather guidelines, which can often be successfully stretched. Know the rules and consider them carefully when looking through your viewfinder. Think of using other choices before releasing the shutter. Composition means the arrangement of all elements in a picture, including shapes, colors, and shades. In the end you must learn to trust your own eyes and judgment. Learning the techniques of photography is much easier than training yourself to see good photographs. Composing well takes time and practice.

LIGHTING: When used with thought and care, lighting adds dimension to your photos. I prefer sun on my subject if doing close-ups. For garden scenes I like diffused light. It spreads evenly, giving a softening of texture not found under bright light. If the sun shines too brightly, the sunny areas look too light and shady areas too dark. If using subdued lighting, the whole scene comes together with better balance.

NATURAL LIGHT: The sun at a 45 degree angle provides the most versatile light. Front light, sidelight, or backlight is available simply by changing where you place your camera. When doing close-ups in my own garden, I find I need to consider conditions other than just light. The sun doesn't rise over the trees until mid-morning, and, by early afternoon, the wind starts rising. To use sun for close-ups, I must work within the fairly short time span of late morning. Getting the garden scenes is much better then. The early daylight, with no wind, provides ideal time for this type of photography. You need to work within the conditions available to you when you do your own work.

FRONT LIGHTING: Front lighting works well for showing all the details on the surface of your subject.

SIDELIGHTING: This is an excellent light, whenever possible, that adds depth and drama, bringing out texture. It is the most useful type of light when texture is important.

BACKLIGHTING: Backlighting is the most dramatic light of all when used for showing hair on flowers, leaves, and insects.

CLOSE-UPS: Macro lenses close focus and give you a flat field photograph. Using a standard lens can distort the edges if you get too close to your subject. A macro lens does not make a close-up or any photo look different. It does, however, keep everything in focus right to the edges. For extreme close-ups of flowers or other subjects, this is important.

TRIPOD: Using a tripod improves almost any photograph, especially close-up photography. With your camera mounted on a tripod, carefully check the viewfinder, to ensure that you are getting what you want, because what you see is what you're going to get. Remember that when you magnify anything on film you also magnify camera vibrations and subject movement. Use a tripod heavy enough to stop any movement in the wind, but light enough for you to carry. Use your tripod to crop your picture before you release the shutter. You can slowly adjust the camera, mounted on the tripod, to ensure you see exactly what you want.

THE EYE OF THE CAMERA: (HOW THE CAMERA SEES) The camera sees objects differently than the human eye. Our eyes mentally correct distortions, while the camera does not. Avoid a background that is distracting, or the wrong color. You may not notice while you concentrate on the main subject, but the camera sees and remembers all. Become accustomed to looking at everything in your viewfinder.

DEPTH OF FIELD: Depth of field refers to the distance between the nearest and farthest objects that appear in focus in a picture. Apertures refer to the f-numbers. In turn, this represents the lens opening on your camera. One way to remember apertures is the simple fact that the larger the f-stop, the more distance will be in focus. If you use f-2, only a small part will be in focus, while if you use f-22 everything in the viewfinder will be in focus. Using this feature enables isolating what you want to show up best in the slide.

SHUTTER SPEED: To photograph a moving subject, choose a faster speed than if capturing a flower with your camera on a tripod when there is no wind blowing. Use a high-speed film for dim light and possibly a medium, or slow speed film for bright light. Also consider the need to stop action or obtain great depth of field. Depending on how much you want in focus, you need to balance the f-stop (aperture) with the shutter speed.

IN CONCLUSION: As important as anything said here, I urge you to enjoy! Photography is a hobby that enhances your enjoyment whenever you use it. It continues to give pleasure as you go over your pictures in years to come. You share it with friends and family. Memories flood back as you remember details otherwise forgotten. It teaches you to look with a closer eye, seeing more of what surrounds you. It provides something that can't be done with most hobbies: If the results don't satisfy you, learn from the error and destroy the evidence. HAVE FUN!

Recipe Requests

Coconut Bundt Cake

(Judi Murakami)

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| 1 C cake flour | 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ C AP flour |
| 2 tsp Baking Powder | $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt |
| 1 C Soft unsalted butter | 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ C sugar |
| 4 eggs | 1 tsp vanilla |
| $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp coconut extract (or almond) | |
| $\frac{1}{2}$ C coconut milk | |
| 2 C unsweetened flaked coconut | |

Preheat oven to 350. Grease a 12 cup bundt pan. Whisk together both flours, baking powder, salt. Beat butter until light and fluffy, add sugar and beat for 2 - 3 more minutes. Add eggs, beating well after each addition. Stir in vanilla and coconut extract. Combine dry with wet ingredients, alternating with 1/2 cup coconut milk, and mix well after each addition. Fold in flaked coconut and spoon mixture into prepared pan, bake for 40 - 45 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool on a wire rack for 20 min. then turn the cake out of the pan.

Cardamom Applesauce Cake

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ C AP flour | $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt |
| 1 tsp. baking soda | 1 tsp. cinnamon |
| $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. ground cloves | $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. ground cardamom |
| 1 tsp. ground ginger | $\frac{1}{2}$ C soft butter |
| 1 C honey | 1 egg |
| 1 C applesauce | $\frac{1}{2}$ C raisins |

Preheat oven to 350F. Sift flour, salt, baking soda and spices. Set aside. Cream together butter, honey and egg, beating until light and fluffy. Beat in the applesauce. Add flour mixture, stir until well blended then add raisins. Pour into greased 9x9 or 9x13 pan. Bake for 50 min. or until tester comes out clean.

Happy Birthday Gwen

Founding "first lady" of our chapter, Gwen Wright celebrates her 80th birthday on March 6th.

Congratulations go to her on reaching this milestone, and a BIG thank you for all her continued contributions.

From the chapter's organizational meetings in 1984 at their home on Nikoliasen Road, to hosting many club functions over the past 30 years, Gwen has always been there for the benefit of all our members.

In turn, all members of the North Island chapter, as well as many others around the District 1 and the ARS, wish Gwen all the very best on her special day with family and friends, and look forward to her contributions for many more years to come!

March Goodies

MYRNA TRIMMER - LOUISE CASSON

JUDI MURAKAMI

CORRINE INNES - MARY ASHTON

Until Next Month
Noni