



# The Rhodoteller

www.nirs.rhodos.ca



**SEPTEMBER**

*North Island  
Rhododendron  
Society  
2014/2015 Executive*

**President**

Jake Ellis.....337-8516

**Vice-President** ..... vacant

**Secretary**

Adrianne McNabb .....898-8712

**Treasurer**

Dave Godfrey .....335-0717

**Past President:**

Paul Wurz .....287-4301

**Director: Ways & Means**

Dick Bonney .....339-7594

**Director: Membership**

Jill Gould .....331-1859

**Director: Revenue Table**

Fran Thornton .....339-3754

**Director: Library**

Ruth Fowler .....890-9448

**Director: at large**

Garth Wedemire .....941-5598

**Newsletter**

Noni Godfrey .....335-0717

..... nonigod@shaw.ca

**Social Committee:**

Claudia Ellis .....337-8516

**Sunshine Lady:**

Nancy Munro .....334-3719

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

## Coming Events

*2nd Sep 2014- Executive Meeting 2:00 pm*

The executive meeting will be held at the home Claudia and Jake Ellis. Driving north along the Old Island highway (past the Hamm Rd. intersection) turn left onto Catherwood Road, just before crossing the Oyster River. Turn left on to Oakes Road at the end of Catherwood and you will find the Ellis home (2436 Oakes) on the right-hand side surrounded by a large wood fence.

*9th Sep 2014- Regular Monthly Meeting*

**Nadine**



**A presentation on "Gardens and Redwoods"**

**A Tour through California and Oregon**

**presented by Nadine Boudreau and Lois Clyde**

Our tour begins in San Francisco including stops at the Filoli Garden and The San Francisco Botanical Garden. Then over to Mendocino to tour a private garden set amongst the redwoods, and on to the Mendocino Coast Botanical gardens, where we spent a day walking through majestic redwoods. Moving north to Oregon we visit Shoreacres State Park, Hinsdale Garden, Greer Nurseries, and a final stop at the spectacular Crystal Springs Park. Most gardens have large collections of Rhododendrons, specialty roses, formal gardens with water features or impressive views.



**Lois**

# President's View

...by Jake Ellis



Somewhere along the way -- probably the day I retired -- I quit keeping track of what day it is. I've had people wish me a happy holiday and I never even knew it was one. So it was a bit of shock when I looked at the calendar today and saw it was August 13th. Not only is it my wife's birthday and obviously I'm already in trouble but I realized that I need to produce my first column for the Rhodoteller in the next 10 days or so.

Where does time go? I've heard that time speeds up as you get older and this summer seems to verify that theory. Going by my personal belief that being busy is a good thing, this summer has been just the best ever. Lots of gardening, lots of golfing, lots of time with friends and family. Looking at my garden, though, maybe I spent a little too much time on the golf course.

Getting back to the calendar, though, I'm not sure whether to feel depressed that summer is winding down or excited that my favourite season will soon be on us. I know that I will miss walking through the garden and seeing the results of all that spring labour -- the lively mixture of colours in our perennial bed, the beautiful roses in full bloom, our rhodos already developing buds for next spring and a brand new bed waiting for the planting to begin. But as I get a closer look, I won't miss those same perennials flopping over and needing deadheading once again. I know I won't miss those pesky weeds! Neither will I miss that summer heat, or dragging hoses, or finding another plant devoured by those @{#\$%\* rabbits!

OK, it's been decided -- bring on those cool days and cooler nights -- bring on those fall colours with the intensity that only the fading light of fall can produce -- bring it on! I'm ready. Bring on those replenishing rains and tree-cleansing winds.

But most of all bring on the fall season of NIRS.

I am totally amazed how important this club has become to me. When I started -- way back in time - - it just seemed like a good idea to learn more about those beautiful plants that seemed to be

everywhere. And then when I discovered that they had trays full of delicious goodies at every meeting, I was really hooked. From there on it just evolved. Listening to all those great speakers and just being around such knowledgeable gardeners, I couldn't help getting a little smarter. But it's more than just about rhododendrons, isn't it? At each event throughout our season it's like a gathering of old friends. Our monthly meetings, the Christmas Party, the annual Plant Sale, the Mother's Day Garden Tour and even the work parties at the Rhodo Garden, all have that same festive feeling about them.

Oh, I'll miss all those perks of summer alright, but I look forward even more to kicking off the 2014 Fall Season of the North Island Rhododendron Society on Sep 9th.

See you there.....Jake

## Tidbits.....



### 2014 ARS Western Regional Conference

Everett, WA September 26-28, 2014. Enjoy the beautiful fall weather in Northwest Washington with your fellow rhodoholics. We have a great group of speakers scheduled to talk about rhodos, hardy fuchsias, trilliums, and Japanese maples. On Saturday evening, Steve Hootman will be taking us along on his first trip to Australia and Tasmania. Come and enjoy good fellowship and food.

District 2 invites you to: Fall Into Rhodies

For conference schedule, speakers, and registration form go to <http://fall2014.arscascade.org/>

### ARS Journal is now on line.



Instructions:

1. Access the ARS Office website: [www.arsoffice.org](http://www.arsoffice.org)
  2. Click on "View Journal American Rhododendron Society online edition"
  3. If you already have a username and password, click on "login". If you do not have a username and password, click on "Register Now" and follow instructions for obtaining them
- (to register, one has to know their membership number which is found on the address label of the Journal or in our North Island Rhododendron Society Yearbook)



# Raffle Rhodos

...by Dick Bonney

We start off our new Rhodo season with a couple of old favourite rhodos. Our first rhodo this month is *Rhododendron Molly Ann*.

**Molly Ann** - ('Elizabeth' x garden hybrid ) A dense compact plant that grows to about 2 feet in height in 10 years. The flowers are a lovely shade of rose and last well. Molly Ann is a very attractive plant that buds heavily. She is hardy to minus 10°F



The second rhodo this month is an unregistered cross, **R. Yakusimanum x Bureavii**

This unregistered and unnamed compact rhodo has great form and a gorgeous cinnamon coloured indumentum. Requires shade and good drainage, as it is prone to root rot. A delightful addition to any garden.



# Member's Notes

...by Dave Godfrey

Wow, hasn't this been a fantastic, hot, summer? As the season begins to wind down, it is time to look back at the work and fun enjoyed over the past few months while the club has been on summer hiatus.

On Saturday, June 14<sup>th</sup>, 50 members and 8 guests attended our club's potluck picnic at the beautiful garden of **Roberts & Adela Smith**. Following several weeks of warm sunny days, the skies were ominous for most of the day. Luckily the precipitation held off until just as the festivities were winding down.

As they arrived, many of the attendees took part in the Garden Stroll/Scavenger Hunt organized by **Barb & Brian Staton**. This was a wonderful way to see the many paths around the garden and to meet new friends along the way. Congratulations to the teams of **Paul Wurz, Helena Stewart, Judi Murakami, Antje Guertler** and her sister, **Maija** (visiting from Germany) with 14 points out of a possible 20, and to the second place team (13 points) **Aji Fliss, Dorothy Law, Diana & John Scott**. Everyone had a fun time!

Following the delicious dinner, outgoing **President Paul Wurz** thanked our hosts **Bob & Adela Smith** for opening their home and garden to us and providing us with a wonderful setting for our annual picnic. This was an extra special gathering as it celebrated the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our chapter's founding.



The highlight of the afternoon was the presentation of a special "Outstanding Service" award to a very surprised but deserving **Diana Scott**. As all agree, Diana has worked tirelessly for many years to help support all facets of our chapter's operation. Vice

President **Jake Ellis**, and Awards Committee Chair **Dave Godfrey** presented the award (an engraved stepping stone) and highlighted Diana's many contributions.



The following weekend, 22<sup>nd</sup> June, six North Island Rhododendron Society members attended the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary for the MARS chapter. President elect **Jake Ellis** presented MARS president, **Linda Derkach**, with an anniversary card and a special cake recognizing their 25 years since our sponsorship.



Some days it seems like work is never ending, both in our own gardens and at our club's Rhodo Garden (CVR6). During June, July and August, work parties take the place of our regular meetings on the second Tuesday evening each month. We make the time adjustment for those members who are still young enough to work during the daytime, but wish to lend a hand with other members in the maintenance of the garden. Somehow this does not seem to have any impact, as it always seems it is the same familiar faces at the work parties.

Nevertheless, there was over a dozen members in attendance each evening to help with the deadheading and garden cleanup. Surprisingly, most of the gardens were cleaned of deadheads (at least the ones that could be reached) in less than two

hours on June 10<sup>th</sup>. Then it was time to concentrate on pruning and weeding on July 8<sup>th</sup> and August 12<sup>th</sup>. As usual, following each work party there was time for coffee and goodies - and were there goodies! Most who attended brought something and the table was always full of delicious treats for all to enjoy. No doubt some of these goodies will end up in our recipe corner soon!

If you have added some new plants to your garden in recent months and need to keep them identified, be sure to check with **Dick Bonney** at our Ways & Means table. He has boxes of plant tags (50 to a box) for sale for \$12. These tags are ideal for labeling your Rhodos or other trees and bushes. Be sure to buy some raffle tickets at the same time, as Dick has a couple of lovely Rhodos up for grabs!

Over the past several weeks, we have collected and cleaned over 5 dozen buckets. Those members interested in purchasing a few, be sure to bring your cash to our September meeting as we will have some for sale at our revenue table. These 5 gallon pails cost \$5 each at several local hardware stores. So at only \$2 each or 3 for \$5, these buckets are a bargain!

Speaking of the revenue table, **Fran Thornton** and **Ann Chevrier** will gratefully accept any donations of plants which members may have potted up over the past few months. Anything garden related is appreciated, including any bags of fruit or special preserves you may have to share.

Although our annual memberships run until December 31<sup>st</sup> each year, we encourage members to renew at the earliest convenience in order to ensure receipt of the winter edition of the Journal which comes out in January. Therefore, **Membership Chair Jill Gould** will gladly accept your cash or cheque payments. The executive has decided that the dues for singles or couples will remain at \$35 for 2015.

In closing, **President Jake** and members of the executive would like to thank **Past President Paul Wurz** and **Directors Brain Staton, Chris Aldred** and **Diana Scott** for their service to the chapter. As they leave the executive, we know that they will continue to provide support where needed. We also welcome new members to the executive, **Jill Gould** (Membership), **Fran Thornton** (Revenue Table) **Ruth Fowler** (Library) and **Garth Wedemire** (Member-at-Large). We look forward to another productive year.



## North Island Rhododendron Society Executive and Committee Chairs



2014 — 2015

### EXECUTIVE OFFICERS:

President: Jake Ellis;  
Vice Pres: Vacant  
Secretary: Adrienne McNabb;  
Treasurer: Dave Godfrey  
Past President: Paul Wurz

### DIRECTORS:

Dick Bonney, Jill Gould, Fran Thornton,  
Ruth Fowler, Garth Wedemire

### COMMITTEES:

#### FUNDRAISING

Ways and Means/Raffle: Dick Bonney  
Revenue Table: Fran Thornton,  
Ann Chevrier  
Membership: Jill Gould  
Rhodo Sale: Nadine Boudreau,  
Jake Ellis



Garden Tour: Diana Scott, Adrienne  
McNabb, Margaret Griffith-Cochrane

#### COMMUNICATIONS

Newsletter: Noni Godfrey  
Sunshine: Nancy Munro  
Webmaster: Dave Godfrey  
Publicity: Helena Stewart  
Historian: Lois Clyde

#### SOCIAL AND EVENTS

Meeting Refreshments: Claudia Ellis  
Rhodo Garden: Ross Munro  
Facilities: Don Law  
Christmas Party: TBA  
Hamper: Margaret Griffith-Cochrane

#### EDUCATION

Library: Ruth Fowler  
Program: Paul Wurz



## Outstanding Service Award

Presented by the  
North Island Rhododendron Society to  
Diana Scott — 14 June 2014



"We are pleased today to present the NIRS 'Outstanding Service Award' to a member of our club for providing sustained and significant contributions to the Chapter. Diana Scott joined the North Island chapter about 12 years ago and has been an active and involved member ever since.

From 2003 until 2008, Diana served as our club secretary; conscientiously carrying out her duties with accuracy and expedience. Then in July 2008, Diana became our President and guided us with her exceptional organizational and leadership skills for the next four years. Until now, Diana has remained on the executive as Past President and as a director; all the time providing guidance and advice for the betterment of the chapter.

In addition to her roles on the executive, Diana has unquestionably provided support to all our club's activities. From organizing the volunteers at our annual sales; organizing gardens for our annual garden tours; attending Rhodo Garden work parties and our many social events, Diana has always made herself available when the need arose.

In June 2007, Diana Scott was presented with the chapter's Bronze Medal award in recognition of her tireless efforts on behalf of the club. Today, we wish to present Diana with an "Outstanding Service Award" for her many years of devotion and continued support to the North Island Rhododendron Society.

Thank you Diana, for your many years of service and congratulations on an outstanding job well-done!"

# A.R.S. 2015 ANNUAL RHODODENDRON CONVENTION

Hosted by the Victoria Rhododendron Society

6-10th May 2015

Sidney-By-The-Sea-Highlight Speakers

Jim Barlup



Jim Barlup has been actively hybridizing rhododendrons on his half acre property in Bellevue, Washington since 1975. For the past 39 years he has 173 registered hybrids to his credit. His former career as a professional photographer provided him with an array of artistic skills that have influenced his colorful palette of hybrids. Among his many credits, he was the official photographer of the Beach Boys first album. As a nurseryman, he acquired the technical skills of plant science. This combination of knowledge has allowed him to become a recognized world class hybridizer.

In 2004 Jim was awarded the ARS Gold Metal for his outstanding hybrids and his generous sharing of seed, pollen, cuttings, plants and knowledge. His hybrid 'Champagne Lace', is the official flower of the 2015 ARS Conference hosted by District 1 in Sidney.

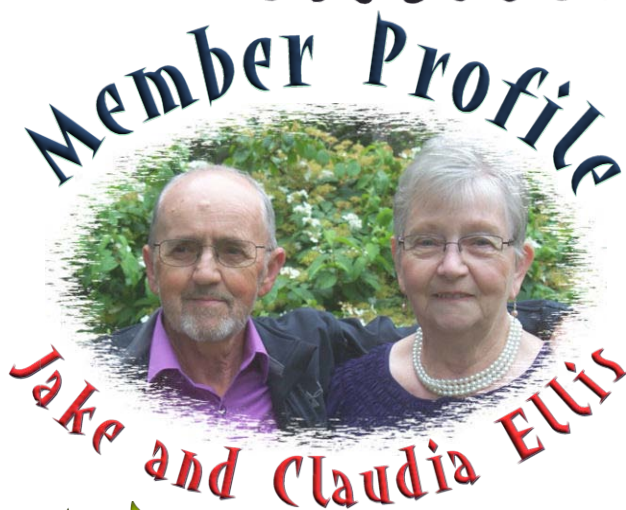
Some of his hybrids that you might recognize are: *Always April, Amber Honey, Amber Peach, Amber Sun, Amber Touch, Amber Waves, Apollo's Touch, April's Morn, Blue Tango, Bridal Dreams, Burgundy Mist, Cade's Cove, Calico Candy, Carol's Candy, Cassie, Fire Rim, Windy River Lois Blackmore, Judy's Choice* and *Peggie Roberts*.

Before his recent attempt to cut back, Jim wrote for the American Rhododendron Society Journal, contributed to the ARS Seed and Pollen Exchanges, provided cuttings to growers and presented programs nationally and internationally. His motto, "I dwell in possibilities" is just as relevant today as it was when he made his first cross in 1975.

The ARS Annual Spring conference is being held in Victoria this coming year, practically in our back yard. I felt it was only fitting to promote some of their keynote speakers, as there are seven very high profile speakers coming from all over the world. Our members are encouraged to attend this convention and take in some of the presentations and of course the garden tours offered on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. For more information on the Spring Convention check out the website. <http://2015rhodo.ca/>



# Member Profile



## Jake and Claudia Ellis



...by Helena Stewart

### Meet your new president: Jake Ellis & his wife, Claudia

In his early days as a member of NIRS, Jake admits to sitting at the back of the room during meetings, semi-involved (maybe even half asleep) despite his long-standing interest in gardens. If you told him then that he would one day be president of the group, he would likely have fallen off his chair—or maybe told you that you were a few eggs short of a dozen.

Jake and Claudia originally joined NIRS shortly after it was formed, but their membership was brief since Jake was posted to Kamloops not long after. He was working as an RCMP dispatcher in Courtenay at the time, following 23 years in the Canadian navy which he joined at 17. Working as a radio operator in the navy, life at sea took him to places about which many people only fantasize: Australia, Chile, Japan, Hawaii, Alaska New Zealand, the Galapagos, Fiji and the South Pacific. “It was great at first being young as a sailor, but eventually friends leave, get married, have children.” Upon retirement in 1980, Jake was ready and eager to move on.

Jake was born in Delbourne, Alberta where his dad was a farmer. When his dad joined the navy in WW2, the family moved to Victoria where Jake grew up surrounded by a navy environment. Claudia was born in Leney, near Saskatoon, but her dad moved the family to Victoria, where the shipyards were in full swing with ships being built for the war effort. “Jake and I didn’t know each other then,” says Claudia. They actually met on a blind date arranged by Jake’s former sister-in-law and were married in 1975.

Despite what their work was, gardens were always in the background with both Jake and Claudia. “It seems I always gardened,” says Claudia “and my father grew every vegetable you can think of.” Jake and Claudia had a garden after they married and Jake actually applied to a garden apprenticeship program at Government House in Victoria (unfortunately, the program ended.)

When Jake retired from the RCMP in 2000, his first business venture was a boarding kennel in Kamloops called ‘The Wagging Tail’ which was sold when they moved to the Comox Valley in 2005. Continuing his mission to avoid

retirement, Jake worked as a security guard in Fort McMurray, as well as being on call as a guard with the RCMP. Following this, Jake directed his interest into a business he had doing garden maintenance (“It was called Garden Gnome.”) “I really wanted to retire after the navy,” he says “but it didn’t work out. Guess I’m just not the retiring type. Did I mention I’m a workaholic?”

When they returned to the Comox Valley, one of the first things they did was rejoin NIRS, even though they only had one rhodo on their property in Black Creek. Jake laughs when he says “I didn’t know A THING about rhododendrons.” (The couple now have built their rhodo collection to around 30.) From the start, they quietly became involved and always were on hand to help with whatever was going on. They were dependable, hardworking and willing, even when it came to accepting an invitation to serve on the executive.

“I really enjoyed my year as a vice president,” says Jake. “I learned a lot and started really listening, probably out of fear,” he laughs. He need not worry—people who know him well admire his quiet competence, his dedication and his commitment along with his willingness to take on new challenges—he started playing golf when he turned 70. Jake comes to the presidency with a new outlook and a number of new ideas.

He thinks maybe he has finally retired: “From now on, it’s just gardening and golf.” And of course, NIRS!



...by Jill Gould



Neem, scientifically referred to as *Azadirachta indica*, is a medicinal tree. Neem oil is derived from the fruit and seeds of the Neem tree, which is native to the Indian subcontinent. The oil is usually harvested by pressing. Neem has been used in traditional Asian medicine and cosmetics for millennia. Neem is still used as an herbal medicine today (for topical, not internal use) and is a popular insecticide. There are many, many websites with information or uses for Neem; if you want more information do a little surfing. Neem oil is available in health food stores and is not expensive.

Neem trees are fast becoming the best tree for medicinal purposes. They are easy to grow and have been used effectively for thousands of years. There are over 150 different known uses for their leaves, bark, seeds and oil. This is a heavily researched herbal remedy, not just old wives tales.

Neem oil can solidify at room temperatures; so in order to mix the oil with water, the bottle can be warmed in lukewarm water to liquefy the contents. Suggested recipe from the Web is 5ml Neem oil, 1 – 2ml insecticidal soap or other detergent,

and 1 litre of warm water. The addition of detergent helps to emulsify the oil. If not using detergent, warm the solution and shake well. You can experiment with this to arrive at your own formula.

It does have an odour, which some describe as garlicky, or like peanuts, but which I would call "sappy". This odour fades fairly quickly in my experience as the application dries on the plant, but you may want to spray your plants in a ventilated area.

An Oregon State University site declares that Neem oil is practically non-toxic to birds, mammals, plants and bees, but may be slightly toxic to aquatic life. Insects must eat the treated plant to be killed. Therefore it follows that insects of the family *Hemiptera* (such as whitefly and aphids) which are sucking insects, can be controlled by Neem. Apparently Neem disrupts the insects' hormonal balance so they cannot mature.

I decided to try it after the usual winter infestation of whitefly hit my houseplants. I mixed a weak solution of Neem in warm water and sprayed African Violets (*Saintpaulia*) and overwintering fuchsias. In two days no more little suckers! The treatment can be repeated as necessary.

Now: several years ago, our Government pesticide branch decided to disallow the sale of Neem as an insecticide. I don't know if they thought it was dangerous, they couldn't quantify the concentration, no one was making fat profits, or what. Many other countries do not have any regulations against Neem oil—Australia for one. However, you can go to your local Health Food store, as I did, and buy Neem oil in small bottles, and mix your own solution. Apparently you are allowed to smear Neem all over your body, but not on your plants? Go figure.



### Grandma's Biscuits

*(served by Sharon Reide of Whidbey Island on our visit in April 2014)*

#### Ingredients:

2 C flour	3 Tbsp white sugar
$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp cream of tartar	$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt
4 tsp baking powder	$\frac{1}{2}$ C Butter
$\frac{2}{3}$ C Milk	



#### Directions:

In a large bowl, mix the dry ingredients. Cut in the butter with pastry blender or two knives until it

resembles coarse crumbs. Add milk and mix with fork only until dough follows fork around bowl. Turn out on floured board and knead gently  $\frac{1}{2}$  minute. Roll and cut with biscuit cutter. I let them stand a little while in the pan before baking and they get fluffier as they rise a little more. Bake at 450°F for 10 to 12 minutes or until nicely colored. I always put a pat of butter on top of each biscuit before baking.



#### Another option:

Roll dough  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch thick. Brush with melted butter and sprinkle with  $\frac{1}{4}$  C sugar and cinnamon mixture. Cut in 2 inch strips (I use a fluted cutter to make it more fun). Stack 5 high and cut in 2" pieces and place in muffin pans cut side down and up so they bake in upright sections. Bake at 450°F for 12 minutes. Kids love these as they can break off a section at a time and they are all buttered and have cinnamon/sugar on each one.



### Zucchini Spaghetti Sauce:

*(Judi Murakami)*

Brown: 1 lb. Italian sausage

Add: 2 lb. grated zucchini

16 oz. tomato sauce

$\frac{3}{4}$  tsp. basil

$\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. rosemary

$\frac{1}{4}$  tsp. oregano

(dried spices)

One of the many ways to use up those never ending zucchini's this summer!



## September Goodies

Can you bring goodies to the September 9<sup>th</sup> meeting? If so, please give Claudia a call 250-337-8516. Claudia will also be taking names for the October and November meetings.



Until Next Month  
Noni

