



The  
Rhodoteller

www.nirsrhodos.ca

**North Island  
Rhododendron  
Society  
Board of Directors  
2015/2016**

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**MARCH 2016**

**Coming Events**

**1st March 2016 -- Executive meeting**

This month's meeting will be held at the home of **Louise Casson**.  
The meeting will start at 10 a.m.

**Regular meeting 8th March 2016**

"**Rhododendrons of the Sikkim**" will be presented by **Sean Rafferty** of the Victoria Chapter. This promises to be an exciting presentation -- come early -- get a good seat. We have adjusted our agenda this time around to allow the speaker to appear first.

**Rhodo in the Banner**

Identify the "**RHODO IN THE BANNER**" and become the latest winner of "**The Garth**", the prestigious award for rhododendron identification. See the back page of this newsletter for a few clues for those who need them.

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

# **NORTH ISLAND RHODODENDRON SOCIETY**

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The Annual General Meeting of the NIRS will be held at the home of Ann Chevrier, 417 King Rd, Comox, B.C. on the 10th of May. At this meeting elections will be held to fill the expiring elected positions on our Board of Directors. The Board of Directors consists of the Executive (President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary) as well as 4 elected Directors.

In June of this year the following positions are scheduled to expire:

President, Vice-President and 3 Directors.

Our Past-President Mr. Paul Wurz has kindly agreed to assume the role of Elections Chair for these elections. If anyone has any questions or would like to be considered for one of these positions please contact Paul.

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## **VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED**

As my term as President winds down, I would like to emphasize the need for someone to take over both as President and as Editor of this newsletter. After June, I will be stepping away from the Board and taking a little personal time. Both my garden and my golf game are crying out for attention. Therefore, I have decided that the June edition of the Rhodoteller will be my last as Editor. Over the next two months please expect a phone call from me looking for my relief. I look forward to convincing you to take a giant leap out of your comfort zone to accept a new challenge. I think, if nothing else, I have shown that , with a little help from your friends, anybody can do these jobs with at least reasonable success. Maybe you won't be a President like Paul or Diana or an Editor like Noni but you could certainly be a Jake.

Jake

**NIRS PLANT SALE**  
**SUNDAY APRIL 24<sup>TH</sup> 2016**

**10AM – 1PM**

**K'OMOX FIRST NATIONS HALL**  
**3320 COMOX ROAD (DYKE RD)**

**A VOLUNTEER SIGN UP SHEET WILL BE PASSED AROUND AT THE MARCH MEETING**  
**IF YOU HAVE A PREFERENCE FOR A PARTICULAR 'JOB' PLEASE STATE IT ON THE SHEET.**

**THERE IS A MORNING SHIFT 8:30ISH – 11:00**

**AFTERNOON SHIFT 11:00 – 1:30ISH**

**YOU CAN ALSO CONTACT NADINE: [ger.nadboud@shaw.ca](mailto:ger.nadboud@shaw.ca)**

**OR MARGARET: [mgriffico@shaw.ca](mailto:mgriffico@shaw.ca)**

**PLEASE REMEMBER TO START POTTING UP ANY PLANTS YOU ARE DIVIDING OR SEEDLINGS GROWING IN THE GARDEN FOR THE NIRS COMPANION TABLE. IF POSSIBLE PLEASE LABEL PLANTS, COMMON NAMES ARE FINE. LABELING HELPS THE SALES TEAM, AND IS GREAT FOR BUYERS TO BE ABLE TO RESEARCH THE PLANT THEY HAVE PURCHASED**



# COMMITTEE REPORTS

*In order to cut some time from the business section of our meetings and make that time available to the Speaker of the evening, we are including the following information from the NIRS Committees. Your feedback on every one of our programmes is encouraged and each idea will be thoughtfully considered.*

## MEMBERSHIP

*Jill Gould*

At our February meeting, we welcomed back three members who renewed, and took in two new memberships. This brings our total NIRS membership to 75. A pleasant surprise was the number of guests who attended (15), including two from the Mt. Arrowsmith, Parksville chapter. We credit our excellent publicity. Some guests have chosen to become members.

Recently I have compiled a summary of our member sign-in sheets. You know, the one we always harangue you to sign as you enter the meeting? And coerce you with “door prizes”? While the summary results were forwarded to the President, here are the averages for the last seven years:

<u>Year</u>	<u>No. of meetings</u>	<u>Average # Members</u>	<u>Average # Guests</u>
2009	9	35	8
2010	10	40	4
2011	9	44	4
2012	9	49	5
2013	9	55	7
2014	9	56	2
2015	9	56	2

You will note that the number of meetings per year varies. We were not always keeping a tally at our June (picnic) or December (Christmas party) meetings, so records reflect this. We are trying to be more precise from now on. Also, some meetings had a large number of guests. It may be due to a visiting club, or a special presentation. This tends to skew the “guest” numbers.

## WAYS AND MEANS

*Lois Clyde*

Our Raffle Rhodos this month are “Starbright Champagne” & R.Arboreum ssp delavyi.

“Starbright Champagne” has wonderful parents which makes this another delightful hybrid from Frank Fujioka. 4', hardy to 0 deg. F. It has an unusual star shaped flower. The flowers are dark champagne with a dark purple throat. Great foliage on a dense, very rounded plant.

R.Arboreum ssp delavyi It's name means tending to be woody or growing in a tree like form. recorded as reaching heights up to 20 metres or more usually 12 metres or 36 feet. Blooms early & mid spring with showy display red bell shaped flowers.

Our Door Prize is “Blaney's Blue” 4-5' hardy to -5 deg. F. Vigorous grower & prolific flowering plant. Very attractive dense foliage. Flowers are misty blue with masses of blooms, which at their peak, glow & sparkle with an almost electric quality.

We also have our “ Greer's Guidebooks” for sale @ \$25

“The Public Gardens of Vancouver Island” by Ian E. Efford. \$25

Plant tags @ \$12 a box

Fundamentals for Growing Rhododendrons @ \$3, great for beginners.

Lovely bags @ \$14 in a variety of colours, very handy for shopping, meetings & travel.

Not to forget our truly coveted bumper stickers “ I Brake for Rhododendrons”. Only 2 left!!

We now have an addition to our table, “Cards by Dick”.

Sets of 6 for \$10 & individual for \$2 each.

These cards are pictures of Dick Bonney's garden. A must have!!

Hope to see you all at the meeting!



'Starbright Champagne'



R. arboreum ssp delavyi



'Blaney's Blue'

# THE RHODO GARDEN

*By Wolfgang Hoefgen*



As advertised, we did have our very first work party of 2016 on Mar 18th. Unfortunately, the turnout was rather sparse. The weather was actually quite nice, though, and the 4 attendees managed to get some serious clean up accomplished. Thanks very much to Wolfgang, Judi and Dale and Claudia. Thanks also to Jim Clyde for bringing Lois by for an outing and to lend moral support. Jim, also, graciously bought the troops a round of coffee and Lois took the attached photos. The next work party will be on **March 10th at 9 a.m.** This one is big -- more clean-up of course, but we have a load of bark mulch coming also -- so a real good turnout would be appreciated. We will need people, wheelbarrows and rakes. Don't forget that **WE'RE HAVING A PARTY -- the 20th anniversary party of the CVRG will be held on the 28th May and we need to have the garden looking great.**



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## WANTED/GIVE AWAYS

**WANTED:** Large (really large) black plastic pots, the kind trees come in. Diameter 20" or so.  
**Call Helena 250-339-1733.**

## THE PROGRAMME

*Co-ordinator Paul Wurz*

### **SEAN RAFFERTY: “RHODODENDRONS OF SIKKIM”**

At our meeting on March 8th, Sean Rafferty of the Victoria Chapter will be recounting a trip taken in May and June 2015 with Rhododendron obsessives from the US and Canada. Led by the RSF's Steve Hootman, the trek was seeking rare rhododendron species found in the Indian Himalayas.

Sean is a retired gardener who has recently moved to southern Vancouver Island, in order to help feed their ravenous deer population. He is a self-taught expert in species rhododendrons and has been an active board member for many District 1 Chapters, as well as the Rhododendron Species Foundation. He is a wealth of knowledge, an enthusiastic individual and a huge asset to the plant community.

## UPCOMING PROGRAMMES

*Paul Wurz*

Mar 8.....Sean Rafferty "Rhodo Searching in Sikkim"

Apr 12.....Terry Richmond and Allen Murray "Rhododendrons and Our Changing Climate."

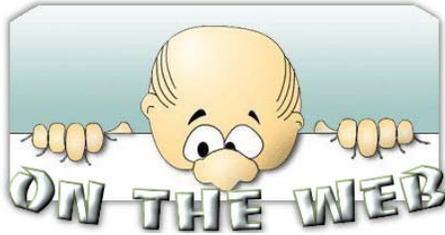
## THE SOCIAL COMMITTEE

*Judi Murakami*

Thanks to everyone who supplied the treats for our last meeting. They were truly delicious and enjoyed by all.

We are looking forward to the tasty treats of Louise Casson, Barb Staton, Corinne Innes , Ruth Fowler and Jamie Willms. We appreciate these goodies for our meetings. For the men - feel free to contribute!

Please keep in mind that we are only too happy to accept voluntary contributions to help in providing coffee and tea and assorted other goodies throughout the year. Watch for the little plastic container as you pour your coffee.



.....by Dave Godfrey

North Island now has a social media account. As announced at our March 16<sup>th</sup> meeting, our chapter now has a Facebook page - the second chapter in District 1, behind Fraser South, to join Facebook. For those who have a Facebook account simply do a search for North Island Rhododendron Society and it will pop up. For those who do not have a Facebook account, you can go to our NIRS website ([www.nirrhodos.ca](http://www.nirrhodos.ca)) where there is a link posted on the homepage.

Please feel free to submit any photos or rhodo related articles for inclusion and watch the pages grow. We are featuring information on our guest speakers up front on the page. It is 'pinned' to the top so as not to be lost with other comments or posts. Please check it out and let us know what you think.

As for our website, Garth Wedemire and I have been discussing options for making our site 'responsive.' In addition to changing the look of the website, we want to make it appear the same on all devices (computers, tablets, cell phones, etc.) This takes a special type of programming, which we are currently investigating. The content of the site will remain much the same, with some further additions, but it will have a different appearance.

Finally, our 2016 Member's Yearbook has been published. For those members who missed our February meeting, your copy will be available for pick up at our March 8th meeting. The roster has been updated to include our 2016 members, plus we have included instructions on how you can access the JARS magazine online. An index with page numbers has also been included. Enjoy!

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## 15TH ANNUAL SPRING PLANT SALE

### VIU'S MILNER GARDENS

Vancouver Island University's Milner Gardens Spring Plant Sale will be held from **10am to 4pm on April 23rd and 24th** at Milner Gardens & Woodland, 2179 West Island Highway, Qualicum Beach, BC.

Great discounts on heritage trees, shrubs and perennials propagated on site by Milner volunteers.

Master gardeners will help answer your plant questions or choose the right plant. Come early for best selection! Enjoy walking through the Rhododendron collection as it begins the spring bloom.

Winter rates admission for this weekend: Adults \$5.25, Youth \$3.25, children 12 and under accompanied by an adult, Milner Gardens members, and current VIU students with card enter free.

Tea Room open 11:30am to 4pm, gardens close at 5pm with last entry 4:30pm.

The gardens open daily commencing April 21st.

For more information please email [milnergardens@shaw.ca](mailto:milnergardens@shaw.ca), phone 250-752-6153 or visit <https://www2.viu.ca/milnergardens>

The following article on *R. quinquefolium* is a reprint from Paghat's Garden (paghat.com). This is a beautiful and informative website and well worth a visit.



## **Goyo-tsutsuji or Five-leaf Deciduous Azalea; aka Shiroyashio, Cork-bark White Azalea**

"Azaleas blossom along the stream,  
such beauty!

Like that village maiden  
who climbed the hillside last year,  
Singing a sweet high song  
about her sweetheart.

She picked an azalea & with it,  
adorned her hair."

*-Chinese folksong*

In a ceremony on 7 December 2001, the Japanese Crown Prince Hirohito & Crown Princess Masaka established the Goyo or Five-leaf Azalea *Rhododendron quinquefolium* as the symbol of their newborn child Princess Aiko, who had been born on the first day of the month. The whiteness of the flowers represents the pure heart of the princess.

This very slow-growing deciduous azalea will usually reach three to four feet high & wide in a temperate, sea-level garden, in ten years.

But it is not actually a dwarf. In its native islands of Honshu & Shikoku, where it grows at high elevations, it can reach fifteen to twenty-five feet, among the larger rhododendrons.

A 1993 recipient of the Award of Garden Merit, Five-leaf Cork Azalea has stunning foliage hardly recognizable as a rhododendron.

The leaves look like a five pointed star, emerging olive-green in April & quickly developing an outline of pink to reddish purple. These leaves have almost the impact of blossoms. The autumn colors of these leaves can be quite a stunning in ruby-red.



**Five-leaf azaleas age with corky fissured bark, hence its other common name Cork Azalea.**

**Two-inch pendulous white flowers look like pointed fairy-hats in late April & May, hanging singly or by twos & threes. If you lift them up to look inside, the stamens are green, & on some specimens the flowers have green interior freckling. They usually open after spring's new leaves have gotten started, so are partially hidden by the foliage.**

**It wants moist well draining humus soil, in bright shade, & is cold-hardy to minus twenty to minus five degrees Fahrenheit. It is highly resistant to root-rot.**

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### **THE RHODO IN THE BANNER**

Win "The Garth" -- a fun, and hopefully educational contest to determine your ability to identify rhododendrons. You might know this one just by the photo but don't forget this contest is all about using whatever resources are available to you

All entrants e-mailed to [jakeellis@shaw.ca](mailto:jakeellis@shaw.ca) with the correct answer will be entered in a draw which will take place at the next meeting.

**PRIZE! PRIZE! PRIZE!**

#### **The Clues**

1. Same hybridizer as Ginny Gee
2. yak x pseudochrysanthum
3. Lydia Ko



# IN LYNN'S GARDEN

*By Lynn Wurz*

## Companion Plants for Rhodo Gardens in the Shade

Shade perennials add variety and interest to the borders of the rhodo beds, complementing the shrubs, extending the blooming season, or just providing a different texture and shade of green.

Hardy cyclamens begin blooming in January, making a carpet of green and silver marked leaves to go with snowdrops and tiny blue-flowered hepatica.

Hellebores start blooming early in every colour imaginable-my collection is growing by leaps and bounds every year as new forms appear. Deer and slugs avoid them-the perfect plant! They can stand a bit more sun and drier conditions than most shade plants so would do well under deciduous trees.

Epimediums are another interesting class of shade perennials, tolerating dry shade and with no pest problems. When last year's leaves are pruned off in January, tiny dangling flowers appear before the new leaves.

Hardy ginger (*Asarum europeum*) forms a shiny evergreen carpet in even the darkest corner; a perfect foil for taller variegated hostas, trilliums, Solomon's Seal (*Polygonatum*), and Astilbes.

Wood anemones (*A. nemorosa*), corydalis, and dicentra form extensive patches over time and aren't aggressive like my lily-of-the-valley, ajuga, or oxalis (They should put a warning on the labels-I'm still trying to get rid of them after 20 years!)

One of my favourite groups of perennials are the primulas - they all seem to do well in our damp, shady soil, but especially the candelabras that love the wet, even growing right in and alongside streams, growing taller with whorl after whorl of flowers in gorgeous shades of pink, red, orange and white. Slugs don't bother them and they multiply easily from self-sown seed.

I'm not going to mention all the ferns and hostas as that would take another whole article.

I hope this inspires you to try some new plants in that dark spot where nothing seems to do well.

Good Luck!

*Lynn*



Merry Bells



Trillium sessile



Hardy cyclamen