



THE APRIL EDITION

RHODOTELLER

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NORTH ISLAND RHODODENDRON SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2017-2018

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APRIL 2018

COMING EVENTS

3RD April 2018-- Executive meeting

This month's meeting will be held at the home of Antje Guertler..
The meeting will start *promptly at 10 a.m.*

A Celebration of Life

Thursday, April 5th, 2018

A celebration of life will be held for Bob Smith on Thursday, April 5th from 3-5 p.m. at the Crown Isle Ballroom. NIRS members invited.

10th April 2018 -- Regular meeting

Another exciting guest speaker from down island -- Mr. Bernie Dinter from Dinter's Nursery in Duncan, B.C. The title of his talk is "Trends in the Nursery Business". Don't forget the presentation starts at 7:30 so come early and get a good seat.

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.

PRESIDENT'S

notes



The snowbirds have been flocking home in droves from southern climes, given the full flight I had from Mexico. It was so nice to see glorious hibiscus, plumeria, bougainvillea, etc., and feel some heat for a change. Spring is lovely too in the Comox Valley, as evidenced by this photo Dale took of our crocus.

The hardy band of volunteers at the March work party successfully shovelled, wheelbarrowed and spread 4 loads of mulch! Many hands make light work, and everyone who passes through the CV Rhododendron Garden appreciates our efforts.

Not only will March roar out like a lion, but the 2nd full moon for March (occurring on the 31st) is known as the Paschal Blue Moon. The last time we had one was in 1999. Easter will be the day after, on Sunday April 1st, also known as April Fool's Day. The last time those 2 dates coincided was in 1956.

Maureen and I attended the District 1 ARS meeting in Horseshoe Bay, and I was thrilled to meet one of the youngest Vancouver executive who was in high school, and had come to meetings with her mom who was a landscape designer. It was great to hear from the different chapters and talk to some of the new reps. For the person who comes on board as Vice President, you'll be able to attend the August meeting in Cowichan with Maureen - something to think about!

April will be our last meeting with a speaker, then get ready for the plant sale on Sunday 29th, one of our fundraisers for the club. All hands on deck, for a fun morning. All volunteers enjoy first pick of the plants, and complimentary coffee and goodies.

Cheers!

Judi

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the North Island Rhododendron Society will be held on Tuesday, 08th May 2018 at Adrienne McNabb's garden, 14 Little Bear Way in Royston. Come at 6:30 PM for a self-directed garden tour, meeting starts at 7:30. Bring a lawn chair!

Business to come before the meeting will include the Annual Financial Report, Reports from Committees, and the Election of Directors and Officers for 2018/19.

There are four 2-year board terms, and one 1 year ending in May. Members wishing to put names forward for nomination are to contact our President Judi Murakami or Nominations Chair Jake Ellis.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

MEMBERSHIP

Jill Gould

Last meeting we had an attendance of 55 members and 4 guests. We welcome guest Zelda O'Connor as a new member, bringing our total membership up to 80. Only those currently on the membership list will be receiving the NIRS newsletter. As Dave Godfrey pointed out at our last meeting, if you have not received your NIRS Roster Booklet yet, please let us know. Not much else to report, as I am out in the garden!!!

HOPE TO SEE YOU AT THE MEETING.

WAYS & MEANS

Our Raffle Rhodos this month are:

(Photos from hirsutum.com, Descriptions from Greer's)



"*Golden Gate*" 3', -20c. Interesting, easy to grow with a compact growth habit. Attractive orange coloured flower. Photo by Harry Wright.



"*Unique*" 4', -20 c. Smooth, oblong leaves produce a thick mound of clover green. The buds show bright pink and open to beautiful buttery cream. Older plants become so covered with flowers that every leaf is hidden. Photo by Garth Wedemire.

Our Door Prize is:



"*Cary Ann*" 3', -20c Cheery coral red flowers flare like a trumpet bell. Beautiful foliage throughout the year. Growth habit compact and broad. Photo by Ken Gibson.

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

"The Public Gardens of Vancouver Island" by Ian E. Efford. **ON SALE \$20!**

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. **Only 2 left!**

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THE RHODO GARDEN

Maureen Denny



Our work party on March 15th was a great success with approximately 14 members attending. Three loads of mulch were delivered by Tyler, who is our contact with the Courtenay parks dept. Everyone pitched in with shovels, wheelbarrows and rakes to mulch the garden beds. The gardens are looking great! I stopped by the gardens a few days ago and saw that three rhodos are in bloom. Rosamundi, Peter's Beauty and a species, R. russatum.

SPRING IS ON THE WAY.

Our next work party will be Thursday April 12th at 10 am.

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Antje Guertler

Thanks very much to everyone involved in bringing such delicious goodies to our meetings. This meeting will see more culinary delights from Barb Staton, Helen Stefiuk, Lynn Wurz, Cathie Arnold and Antje.

Please don't forget your mugs, cutlery and whatever else you might need.

UPCOMING SPEAKERS and MAJOR EVENTS

- April 10th -- Bernie Dinter from Dinter's Nursery in Duncan. "Trends in the Nursery Business".
- April 29th -- Annual Rhodo Sale and Show.
- May 8th -- Annual General Meeting at Adrienne McNabb's residence.
- May 13th -- NIRS Mother's Day Garden Tour.

PROPAGATION GROUP

Diana Scott

It is Spring! Thanks to Wolfgang and Antje for tending all the plants throughout the winter. Our little cuttings were kept warm and watered, and most of our plants took root so we are delighted! Our



'yearlings' in the cool greenhouse were monitored and watered as needed, and we now are ready to repot them. Members of the Propagation group formed teams to assist Wolfgang and Antje each Saturday over the month of March and we will continue throughout the Spring season, potting up plants and organizing the 'stock'.

The plants for the upcoming Rhodo Sale are looking good and many are budding up beautifully. Sadly for our potential purchasers, our Snow Lady rhododendrons and other early bloomers will have dazzled the holding bed before the Sale, but many others will be in fine form by the end of April.

Our cool greenhouse cuttings are being potted up and will be kept outdoors for the summer. We have a wonderful variety, many of which are species. We are excited! As our most recent cuttings mature, they will be potted up and spend the summer in the cool greenhouse. They cycle continues!



We are having a blast. It is such fun to watch these 'sticks' become wonderful plants and we once again encourage interested members to join us!

THE PROGRAMME

by Dave Godfrey



Our April 10th guest speaker will be Mr. Bernie Dinter from Dinter's Nursery in Duncan, BC. Bernie will speak to us on... "Trends in the Nursery Business"

Bernie Dinter is a well-known nurseryman who operates Dinter Nurseries, just across from the Whipple Tree junction in Duncan. His knowledge of the gardening world is extensive. His topic for our April 10th presentation will focus on the changing gardening world and its impact on gardening in

general. Gardeners of all types will find this most informative as they look into the future of our ever-changing world. This should be a very interesting presentation about how society's expectation of gardening is changing with the new millennium generation.

THE NIRS PLANT SALE 2018

29TH APRIL

Team leader Noni Godfrey

Plans are well underway for our annual Rhododendron Sale and Show. The event will be held, as usual, in the K'ómoks First Nation Hall at 3320 Comox Road (Dyke Road for you old timers). Please park on the grassy area next to the hall, not on the neighbouring properties!

Thanks to Diana Scott, our volunteer co-ordinator; all volunteer positions are filled as usual. But don't worry, if you haven't talked to Diana about a job for the day we can still put you to work, no problem!

We ask that all volunteers come as early as possible, hopefully around 8:30 am. The doors open to the public at 10:00 and there is lots of work to be done beforehand.

Also as per usual, we ask that our members bring some goodies (cakes, cookies, sandwiches etc) for the workers to snack on while preparations are underway. Our social committee will be providing coffee and tea for refreshments.

We ask that this year our volunteers refrain from 'shopping' until 9:30 to give everyone a chance to get organized. We will make an announcement when the shopping can commence. Also, no storing of plants in the kitchen this year, we will be using the chair/table room for a holding area for our volunteers to keep their plants until they can go through the checkouts.

Lynn Wurz will be heading up the truss display so get your trusses to her as early as possible in the morning! I also ask that you send a list of the names of any trusses you wish to bring for the display to me. Please e-mail me your lists no later than say Saturday morning as I must print up tags. You should know by then what Rhodos are in bloom! Don't worry if you don't bring all you list, better to have too many tags than not have one for your favourite rhodo! E-mail to nonigod@shaw.ca

As you do your early spring cleanup and perennial split —don't forget to pot up a few extras for our NIRS companion plant table! This table is always a customer favourite and brings in a lot of

revenue for the club. Please label the plants with names, common names are fine. This helps the sales team set up go a lot smoother and gives the customers names to look up if they wish!

Maureen Denny will be heading up the information table and will have access to the internet. If any customers are asking for information and you cannot answer, direct them over to her table.

Carolyn Chester will be selling tickets for our Annual Mother's Day Garden tour at the Ways and Means table, along with the team promoting our booklets and pamphlets.

I will be providing a copy of the poster for publication with this month's newsletter. Please print out some copies and post in your neighbourhood. We must get the word out!

Any questions regarding the sale don't hesitate to call or e-mail me. 250-335-0717 or nonigod@shaw.ca

MOTHERS DAY GARDEN TOUR GATE SITTERS

May 13th from 10:00 am. – 4:00 pm

2 shifts for sitters

9:45 — 1:00 pm

12:45 — 4:00 pm

Remember gate sitters receive a

'complimentary ticket'

To view gardens before or after shift

Sign Up Poster will be at the April Regular Meeting!

A WONDERFUL WOODLAND PLANT

by Kailey Caldwell-Waluk

When I first got into woodland gardening I can remember being confused as to what to plant under a large *Acer palmatum*. It was deep shade and I had already planted a few amazing ferns such as *polystichum munitum*, *polystichum polyblepharam*, *Matteuccia struthiopteris* and of course some hostas I found locally.

I wanted some nerdy type fun plants. Something that I could look at and admire as I strolled through. A quick Google search and I came across a wonderful woodland plant that I would love to inform you about.

Podophyllum is a herbaceous woodland perennial hardy to zone 6. They belong to the family berberidaceae and were described in 1763. There are a few species, but what makes them really interesting are the hybrids and crosses coming out and definitely not the boring wiki stuff I just copied down (well to me anyway).

I quickly tried to track down these beautiful plants and their variations. This proved to be a hard task. Lots were coveted by plant geeks alike and also fetched close to \$100 for a single one gallon plant. Some were also reported to just vanish and never arise the following spring. Still I needed to have just one.... and that's how it started.

My favorite *podophyllum* (and yes it's hard to have just one) would be *podophyllum delavayi* or *dysosma*. They are strong growers and there are amazing colors now available if one persists to bug the collectors and specialty nurseries offering them. The leaves are 12" and lobed. Bold colors like glorious reds, dark purples, greens, browns all splashed in together. It can be crossed with other *podophyllum* like *versipelle*, *pleianthum*, and rumor has it 'spotty dotty' as well. It takes two different plants to cross pollinate. They are not self fertile.

The list of *podophyllum* to grow would be:

P. delavayi, *maurei*, *hexandrum*, *spotty dotty*, *starfish*, *difforme*, *pleianthum*, *sinopodophyllum hexandrum*, *red panda* and there are always crosses that are great to grow like *delavayi x versipelle*, 'down for brown', 'red hot mess'.

Now my collection has grown. I grow some really lovely hybrids from plant collectors on the east coast, Washington and Europe. They have started to become available in limited quantities in local nurseries and some have now gone into tissue culture. I just started to cross pollinate some this last year and there are currently lots of babies in my greenhouse.

Keep your eye out at local alpine shows, plant sales, garden centers and sometimes you can order them online through nurseries in the USA. Far Reaches Farms has amazing selections.



Delavayi



Spotty Dotty



"Red Hot Mess"

MARCH BLOOMERS

GLORIA AND BERNIE'S PLACE



The beautiful *R. parvulumatum* "Ocelot"

(photos by Bernie Guyader taken in his garden March 24th)

HELEN AND JOE'S PLACE



R. dauricum



R. praevernum

Photos taken in Joe and Helen Stefiuk's garden mid-march. Both have been blooming for about 3 weeks. These beauties came from the Species Foundation about 25 years ago when Joanne Foster brought in a truck load.

OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE GREIG RHODODENDRON SPECIES GARDEN

Sunday, April 22nd

Vancouver Island University's Milner Gardens & Woodland along with the five District 1 Island Chapters of the American Rhododendron Society will be officially opening the new Greig Rhododendron Species Garden at Milner Gardens & Woodland on Sunday, April 22nd at 1:00 pm.

This new addition to Milner Gardens & Woodland has been many years in the making and we are looking forward to welcoming our members and guests in to this new space. The Greig Rhododendron Species Garden is a long-term project that will take years to fully complete. However it is already a place of beauty and interest that deserves to be thoroughly enjoyed, starting this spring.



HISTORY OF THE GREIG RHODODENDRON SPECIES GARDEN

Initial discussions of a Rhododendron Species Garden at Milner Gardens & Woodland began back in 1998. Although far too early in the evolution of Milner Gardens to begin such a project, the idea carried on. In 2014, with support and guidance from the five District 1 island chapters of the American Rhododendron Society, the planning process began in earnest.



The goal of the proposed garden would be to highlight the tremendous diversity found within the genus-Rhododendron, including some of the unique and rare species that are threatened in the wild, and representative species from key regions where they are found naturally, and in some cases, are endangered. As most of the historic rhododendrons at Milner Gardens & Woodland are hybrids, the species garden would also highlight many of the parent species of these historic rhododendrons.

After the initial planning phase, Jim Cadwaladr, founding director of Milner Gardens & Woodland and retired landscape architect, volunteered to create landscape designs for the new garden. With the landscape plans in place the next step was to clear the existing second growth trees. As a result of this

clearing, a layer of history was uncovered showing that the site had been used by First Nations many centuries before. To properly assess this discovery, construction was temporarily halted until an archaeological inventory of the area was completed.

After the site assessment was completed, construction began again. Throughout 2017, Milner Gardens' and Rhododendron Society volunteers, students, and staff worked hard to prepare the space to properly house the intended collection of species Rhododendrons. The first section of fence was built and 600 yards of specially mixed soil was spread.



In June 2017 the first rhododendrons were planted and lovingly tended by volunteers through a very hot and dry summer. The next influx began early in the fall, initially with volunteers applying a thick layer of mulch, followed by the delivery of 14 large specimens that were carefully transported by crane truck, thanks to Windsor Plywood.

The work through the early part of this year has carried on at a rapid pace with the completion of the fence, more mulching, stone work, and planting of specimen trees.



The Greig Rhododendron Species Garden was named after the Greig family, in recognition of Mary and Ted Greig's significant contribution to horticulture, as well as their role in the development of the original heritage rhododendron collection at Milner Garden.

We look forward to the continued development and growth of the Greig Rhododendron Species Garden. It is a wonderful example of what can be achieved when we work together to build something special for today and for future generations.

THE RHODO IN THE BANNER

"Golfer"

(What I hope to be tomorrow)

