



THE DECEMBER EDITION  
**RHODOTELLER**

www.nirsrhodos.ca

**NORTH ISLAND  
RHODODENDRON SOCIETY  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
2018-2019**

**President**

Maureen Denny.....890-0522

**Secretary**

Carolyn Chester.....619-5864

**Treasurer**

Dave Godfrey.....335-0717

**Past-President**

Judi Murakami.....338-4601

**Director: Ways & Means**

Claudia Ellis.....702-1416

**Director: Membership**

Nadine Boudreau.....871-7810

**Director: Revenue Table**

Judith Walker.....339-1146

**Director: Propagation**

Wolfgang Hoefgen.....339-2271

**Programme Co-ordinator**

Dave Godfrey and Garth Wedemire

**Co-ordinator CVRG**

Maureen Denny.....890-0522

**Sunshine Lady**

Joanne Williams .....941-2540

**Social Committee**

Antje Guertler.....338-2306

**Publicity**

Helena Zukowski.....339-1733

**Webmaster/ Face Book**

Dave & Noni Godfrey and Garth Wedemire

**Library**

Noni Godfrey.....335-0717

**DECEMBER 2018**

**COMING EVENTS**

**4th December 2018-- Executive meeting**

This month's meeting will be held at the home of Joanne and Doug Williams. The meeting will start at **10 a.m.**

\*\*\*\*\*

**11th December 2018 -- Christmas Party**

December, of course, brings our Annual Christmas Party. Kick off the festive season with all your Rhodo friends. Lots of laughs, scrumptious food followed by games and more laughs. A wonderful end to the 2018 Fall Season. See inside for more details.

\*\*\*\*\*

**30 April - 3 May 2018**

More details inside also re our upcoming tour to Washington State where we will be hosted by the Pilchuck Chapter and tour some remarkable rhododendron gardens.

*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

Christmas seems to be creeping up on me very fast this year. It seems the older I get the faster it comes. Not sure why this happens as we age. Time is just speeding up it seems!

The sublime late fall, early winter weather this year has been a real bonus for all us gardeners.

I have seen lots of plants in bloom. Calendula, roses, violets, the Mexican Orange shrub, rhodos, just to name a few.

In my garden the Japanese Forest grass is still looking great, a soft tan/gold swathe. A variegated green/gold holly seems to glow on dull days. I can see the marbled green/white leaves of *Arum italicum*, *Cyclamen hederifolium* and *Asarum* 'Quicksilver'.

*Rhododendron cinnabarinum* is a soft green smokey blue. Hellebore flowers are peeking up.

The winter garden can be very beautiful!

Last week I was actually getting some weeding done with the gleeful knowledge that any weeds removed now are a few less I will have to get out next spring. Hooray! Today November 27, it is 12 degrees C on our sunny south facing covered deck in Comox. The day before I took a walk down the trail which follows Brooklyn Creek down to the ocean. Just at the foreshore there is a plaque erected to the memory of Mack Laing beside his old now crumbling home, 'Shakesides'. There are quotes from Henry David Thoreau, one which states: 'A man is rich in proportion to the number of things he can do without.' No wonder I can't get in the Christmas mood.

I think I will count on our annual NIRS Christmas Potluck Party to perk me up. It is just on the horizon. This party is really fun with games and wonderful food. The club will provide ham and turkey. Doors open at 5pm. December 11<sup>th</sup>.

I am looking forward to this evening.

See you all at the church hall.

*Maureen*

# MEMBERSHIP

*Nadine Boudreau*

We had a great turn out at the November meeting, 63 members and 7 guests enjoyed Garth and Sue's presentation.

Sue Klapwijk is a new member to our chapter and Chris Aldred signed up as an associate member.

2019 memberships are at 69, these names will be entered into the draw for a free membership. The draw will take place at the Christmas party.

Since it is a party in December, we will not be issuing memberships, if you have an envelope with your renewal info/payment, we will accept that and issue your card in January.

PLEASE NOTE, at the party please sign in as per membership, only one ticket per couple, this is to give more opportunity for draw gifts to more members.

Thanks to Lois and Jill for all their help at the membership table!!

---

# THE RHODO GARDEN

*Maureen Denny*



The weather was certainly on our side for last month's work party. Lots of raking got done by twelve volunteers. The day was so nice we had coffee and goodies outside at the picnic table. Not bad for mid November.

This was our last work party for the year.

Thanks to everyone who helped to keep The CVRG looking so great this Fall.

Maureen

# GARDEN TOUR 2019

*Judi Murakami*

For those of you who appreciate international gardens and amazing hospitality, our trip to Washington State in 2019 is for you. The members from Pilchuck Chapter will be hosting us from April 30th - May 3rd. It is a tradition that started years ago, and since we hosted them in 2017, they will be rolling out the red carpet for us next year.

We will drive there (cheapest by ferry from Sidney to Anacortes) on Tuesday April 30th, and meet our billets that evening.

You also have the option of staying in a hotel, but I find it so much fun staying with other ARS members as lifelong friendships result, and having all the meals provided makes it a very economical trip.

We will tour gardens for the next 2 days, ending with a combined picnic of Whidbey Island folks and Pilchuck hosts.

We will leave on Friday the 3rd, and make our way back home. Some people are choosing to visit friends enroute so will take their own car. If you would like to come please email me @ [judimm@shaw.ca](mailto:judimm@shaw.ca) and let me know:

1) if you need a ride or are willing to be a driver (and number of passengers you can take);

2) how many will be in your party (and number of beds required)

3) any mobility (or health) restrictions

4) food or pet allergies

---

## THE 2018 CHRISTMAS HAMPER

*Diane Van Oostdam*

Christmas Greetings!

At the November meeting, people were generous and either brought food or gave financial donations (so I could purchase food items on their behalf to fill the hamper). If you still wish to contribute to the Christmas hamper, you can see below what is marked with an X are items we already have. I will be at the December NIRS Christmas party. This year we are sponsoring a couple with 2 boys, a 15 year old and a 9 year old. If you wish you can bring a gift for one of the boys.

As always, thanks for your support of this project. Treats for the parents are always a nice option too.

Please phone or email if you have any questions.

**Diane Van Oostdam**

**250-650-0437**

- |                            |                                       |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. SUGAR (1 KG.)           | 13. X CANNED SALMON OR TUNA           |
| 2. FLOUR (1 KG.)           | 14. JAM OR HONEY                      |
| 3. COFFEE (300 GRAMS)      | 15. PEANUT BUTTER                     |
| 4. TEA (SMALL PACKAGE)     | 16. X SPAGHETTI                       |
| 5. JUICE (TETRA PACK -2    | 17. X SPAGHETTI SAUCE                 |
| 6. X SOUP (ASSORTMENT)     | 18. SNACK TREATS                      |
| 7. X CANNED VEGETABLES (2) | 19. RICE                              |
| 8. COOKIES                 | 20. X ITEMS -TOOTHPASTE, HANDSOAP,    |
| 9. X CRACKERS (1 BOXES)    | SHAMPOO, TOOTHBRUSH                   |
| 10. STUFFING MIX           | 21. X PAPER PRODUCTS (NAPKINS, TOILET |
| 11. CRANBERRY SAUCE (TIN)  | PAPER, PAPER TOWELS)                  |
| 12. X CEREAL (1 BOXES)     |                                       |

*Cash in envelope to cover purchase of perishables, such as turkey, bread, buns, milk, fruit & vegetables.*

Need a ride to one of our meetings?



Call Sue at 1-778-995-3262  
or send her an email at [grant.sk@gmail.com](mailto:grant.sk@gmail.com)

## LACE BUGS ON THE MOVE

By Leslie Cox - November, 2018

*(The following article has been authorized by the author -- Thanks Leslie.)*

After first reporting about the pieris lace bugs (*Stephanitistakeyai*) in January 2015, it would seem their numbers are increasing.

It is not hard to understand why the population is growing in the valley. Having arrived on one or more infested plants...and with a reproduction rate of up to five generations in one growing season...this pest was destined to spread. Especially if the gardener does not know what symptoms to look for on their plant, or plants.

The biggest clue there are lace bugs on your pieris shrub is a yellow mottled pattern on the upper side of the leaves. This is caused by lots of these little pests sucking the sap...mostly from the underside of the leaves, but occasionally on the upper side too. You may also notice shiny little dots of black excrement on the underside of the leaves.

You have to look sharply for the adult lace bugs because at a mere 3.0 – 4.0 mm (0.11 – 0.16 in) in length, they are pretty darn small. A magnifying hand lens certainly helps, if you have one handy.

Identifying features for the pieris lace bug are a slightly flattened black body and mostly transparent wings held neatly folded over and extending just past the abdomen. Very hard to see without a magnifying lens, or a macro lens on your camera, is the black cross on its wings and the delicate black veining. The antennae are decently long for such a tiny creature and it has six pale legs...like any self-respecting true bug...albeit a nasty pest.



As of this writing in November 2018, you can still find at least a few adult lace bugs on the pieris shrubs...if you have this pest in your garden. There is some conflicting information about whether the adults survive the winter temperatures, or not. So far I have not

found any firm details of what temperature lows the adult and nymph lace bugs can tolerate. My guess is this would be dependent on where you live...not only latitudinal, but also with respect to micro-climate. What is generally known is: the eggs can, and do, overwinter.

So now would be a very good time to get down on your knees and systematically search the underside of the lower leaves on your pieris shrubs. This is the part of the shrub where the females lay their eggs. What has not been stated is if this is the part of the shrub where all generations of eggs are laid through the rest of the season. They could possibly be found in other parts of your shrub, unfortunately. Especially as their numbers increase through the summer.

Look along the main vein on the underside of the leaves for the overwintering egg deposits. This is where the female typically lays her eggs...although not always. Specifically look for a raised, light brown lump. This is where the female has pierced through the lower epidermal layer of the leaf to deposit her eggs and then covered them with a secretion she manufactures.

The overwintered eggs will start to hatch sometime from mid-April through into May...depending on spring temperatures. The newly emerging nymphs are almost clear, so are even harder to spot than their parents. They will remain clustered together in their little group until after the second or third moult. At that point, each one will head off to a new feeding spot on their birth leaf. The nymphs gradually darken in colour as they grow through a total of five instar stages, or moults...each instar lasting less than a week. They also develop tiny black spines along the edge of their abdomen. At the end of about a month, the nymphs have transformed into full-sized adults.



I have not been able to determine exactly how long the egg gestation period lasts during the warm seasons. However, if I were to hazard a guess based on a reproduction period spanning five generations, the non-winter egg stage likely lasts no more than two weeks. Probably more in the range of seven to ten days.

Oh, and just to give you some idea on how a pieris lace bug infestation can get away from the gardener...each female lays five to seven eggs per day. In her lifetime, she will lay a total of about 300 eggs...times five generations in a season. This almost rivals an aphid infestation, so all gardeners should really be concerned about this pest.

How to fight back? Many learned references I consulted have recommended using insecticides or pesticides. Naturally, if the gardener wishes to use these sprays, he/she should check the by-laws in their city or town. Other experts have advised using a jet stream of just water and still others recommended using an insecticidal soap.

My leaning would be to treat the shrub with horticultural oil over the winter months. The reason is: less possibility of harming any beneficial insects which may be feeding on the pieris lace bugs. And there are a few beneficial insect species who will come to the gardener's rescue. The list includes: lady bugs, green lacewings, earwigs, spiders and probably a few others.

Spray treatment must be thorough on both upper and lower sides of the leaves and a repeat dosing is recommended in order to ensure all egg clusters have been covered in oil to effectively smother/kill them. However, if your shrub is too badly infested, you may want to consider removing the shrub and burning it.

In summary, pieris lace bugs are largely species-specific in just infesting *Pieris* spp. but they have been known to infest certain rhododendrons as well...although there is a native North American rhododendron lace bug (*Stephanitis rhododendri*).

There is also a separate lace bug which attacks azalea plants, called *Stephanitis pyrioides*. Both the latter and *S. takeyai* (pieris lace bug) were originally native to Japan but have become quite well-established in numerous parts of North America.

If you discover any whitish-tan coloured adult lace bugs with no black cross on their wings, you have found either rhododendron or azalea lace bugs, unfortunately. Yellow mottled leaves on either of these plant species indicates the presence of their respective pest.

For more information about all three of these lace bugs, plus more photos, visit my website: <https://duchessofdirt.ca>.



## Christmas Party.....



NIRS Christmas Party time again...Everyone ready for another great party?? Following tradition, we will be ending the year with a festive social get-together on December 11<sup>th</sup>. Party starts at 5:00 to make it an earlier night to drive home in the December darkness. Executive and helpers please arrive around 3:30 to 4:00 pm...Thanks!

Everyone attending is reminded to bring their appys, salads or desserts etc. to the pot-luck dinner. (Remember what you signed up for? If not give Antje Guertler a quick call) This year the club will be providing a ham and a turkey.

The committee has decided to forgo gift giving in favour of draws for various prizes throughout the evening, including several Christmas centerpieces and a Christmas wreath.

To lighten the evening a bit, Dave and Noni will again be hosting the "Christmas Trivia" game, with all new questions. Garth and Sue will be hosting the "Head and Tails" game again this year and it will be played during the answer breaks of the trivia game. Don't forget to bring your loonies if you want to play all four rounds of the game.

Your Christmas committee is working hard to make this year's Christmas party a big success. Come on out and have yourself a merry merry good time. Socialize over hot cider drinks and play the now traditional guessing games to fill the time before dinner.

See you there!





## THE RHODO IN THE BANNER



R. Robert Louis Stevenson

Because Claudia and I don't have a garden right now, I've been hanging around and exploring Lynn and Paul Wurz's garden a lot. The other day Paul pointed out a rhodo I had never heard of before. That in itself is not unusual but the name brought an instant flashback to my childhood. I have no idea how old I was but I vividly recall a book of poems and one poem in particular by Robert Louis Stevenson. I loved that book and I can't wait to see this rhododendron in bloom.

### Rhododendron 'Robert Louis Stevenson'

#### The Land of Counterpane

When I was sick and lay a-bed,  
I had two pillows at my head,  
And all my toys beside me lay,  
To keep me happy all the day.

And sometimes for an hour or so  
I watched my leaden soldiers go,  
With different uniforms and drills,  
Among the bed-clothes, through the hills;

And sometimes sent my ships in fleets  
All up and down among the sheets;  
Or brought my trees and houses out,  
And planted cities all about.

I was the giant great and still  
That sits upon the pillow-hill,  
And sees before him, dale and plain,  
The pleasant land of counterpane.