



THE MARCH EDITION

RHODOTELLER

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**NORTH ISLAND
RHODODENDRON SOCIETY
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MARCH 2018

COMING EVENTS

6th March 2018-- Executive meeting

This month's meeting will be held at the home of Jake and Claudia Ellis. The meeting will start promptly at *10 a.m. so allow time for your travel to Black Creek. (25 mins from the Police Station).*

13th March 2018 -- Regular meeting

Another exciting speaker from "down the road" -- a Past President of the Victoria Rhododendron Society, Mr. Bill McMillan will present "The Five Must See Gardens of the Victoria Area. Don't forget the speaker starts at 7:30 so come early and get a good seat.

A Reminder

When you arrive at the meeting please don't hesitate to give a hand setting up the chairs and tables. It can be hard work for some of our older members. And don't forget Antje working away in the kitchen. Antje would never ask but sometimes she could use a little help.

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

As we come to the end of the month, I'm hoping that it's the end of the snow. I've certainly seen enough of the white stuff, pretty that it is. It's great on the mountain, and it does protect our rhodos from that biting cold, but enough is enough.

Last month Roberts (Bob) Smith passed, and his obituary appeared in the UCLA announcements: <http://newsroom.ucla.edu/stories/in-memoriam:-roberts-smith-one-of-uclas-first-professors-of-biochemistry>

Although it's always sad when friends leave this earth, it's always amazing to see their legacy. On that note, another of our members, Phil Matthews, Director of Ways & Means, made his transition on February 14th. Phil and Patty handled the refreshments in 2016-2017, then Phil took on the Director position. Unfortunately his cancer returned, and he was absent for the last few months. His obituary can be read below:

<https://www.tonefffunerals.com/obituary/phillip-matthews/>

On a happier note, Spring starts March 20th, so there is always hope that brighter days are ahead.

May you enjoy each and every day, whatever the weather, and give your loved ones a hug.

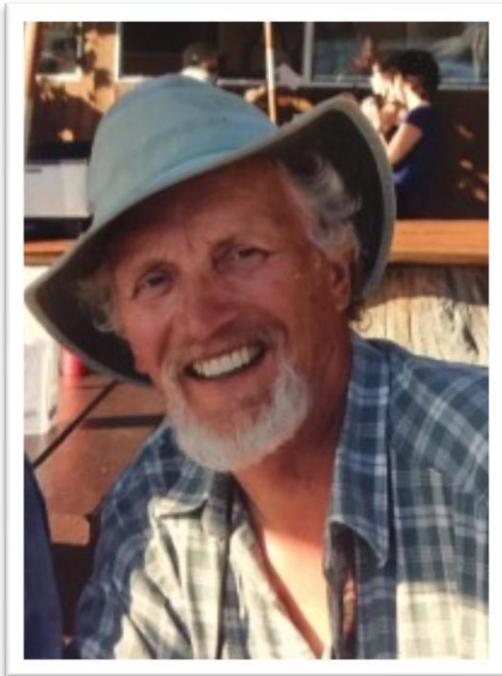
Cheers!

Judi

‘In Memoriam’

Phillip Matthews

July 29, 1946 - February 14, 2018



All too often these days we seem to be bidding a farewell to another member of the North Island chapter of the Rhododendron Society. It was with shock and sadness that we received the news about the passing of our friend and fellow member, Phillip Matthews on Wednesday, February 14th.

Phil and Patty joined the NIRS just three years ago, back in February of 2015. They immediately became involved with helping our club in whatever capacity they could. For one year, Patty and Phil helped with the social committee ensuring things ran smoothly in the kitchen area during our meetings.

Then at the AGM last May, Phil agreed to become a director on the executive and volunteered to look after the Ways & Means (fundraising) committee. He was just getting to know the position when news came last fall that his cancer had returned.

Phil will be dearly missed, but remembered for his infectious smile and happy nature. The meetings will not be the same without him.

Our sympathies and support go out to Patty, his daughter Julie, his son Cam and his four grandchildren in their time of loss.



Lee's Scarlet

COMMITTEE REPORTS

MEMBERSHIP

Jill Gould

The February meeting had a good turnout of 50 members and two guests. Kathy Haig, who gave the presentation on Project Watershed, signed up as a member. Must have been impressed with us! Also Ron and Rea Sutton, of Fanny Bay, joined as Associate Members. This gives us a total of 79 members, seven of which are associates. This puts us at about our usual quota, and those who are members received their NIRS Yearbook.

With this vibrant force, we are ready for our spring season: elections, Plant Sale, bus tour, Mothers Day Garden tour, June picnic.... Lots to get involved in! See you at the March meeting.

WAYS & MEANS

Our Raffle Rhodos this month are:

(photos by Garth Wedemire from *hirsutum*, descriptions from *Green's*)



"*Rosamundi*" 4', -20c. Very early bloomer. Often confused with Christmas Cheer. Very light pink flowers. Compact plant with an attractive appearance.



" *Daphnoides*" 4', -26 c. Foliage unlike any other rhododendron. Rolled, glossy leaves tightly spaced on the stems of this dense mound. Deep green leaves with small pom-pom trusses of deep purple.

Our Door Prize is:

Life and gardens need to be full of surprises. This month's door prize is an "unknown pink". Now don't start pooh-poohing this "unk" as we call them. This is a beautiful little rhodo. It does have a name -- we just don't know it. Give this rhodo a chance -- take it home -- love it and just see what happens.

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!**

Hope to see you all at the meeting!

THE RHODO GARDEN

Maureen Denny



Approximately seven club members met February 15th for our first work party of the year. The weather cooperated, no rain, but it was quite a cool morning. The gardens are looking good, most of the mornings work involved raking and sweeping up from the winter storms. We met with Tyler Johns our liaison from the City of Courtenay's garden department to discuss the expansion and renovation of the garden bed behind the chamber of commerce building. This work will proceed soon with volunteer help from club members. The next Work Party will be on March 15th at 10am. We will be spreading the annual application of mulch. Please bring a shovel and a wheel barrow if possible. Remember the old saying "many hands make light work" so come and have some fun!

Our next work party will be held Thursday March 15th at 10am.

UPCOMING SPEAKERS

Dave Godfrey

March 13th -- Bill McMillan of the Victoria Chapter -- "The five must see gardens in the Victoria area".

April 10th -- Bernie Dinter from Dinter's Nursery in Duncan.

May 8th -- Annual General Meeting at Adrienne McNabb's residence.

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 Claudia Ellis, Nadine Boudreau, Valerie Ferris, Margaret Griffith-Cochrane and Antje.

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

THE PROGRAMME

by Dave Godfrey



Our March 13th guest speaker will be **Mr. Bill McMillan of the Victoria Rhododendron Society**. Bill is a past president of the VicRS and has served many years on their executive in one capacity or another.

A retired geologist, Bill now propagates and grows rhododendrons, alpines and other plants from seed and cuttings. He shares his considerable knowledge and experience through presentations to various garden clubs. Bill describes himself as an enthusiast, rather than an expert.

For our meeting, Bill will be presenting the topic “Five Must See Gardens of the Victoria Area.” This presentation is sure to fire up a lot of members to take a tour of Victoria during the spring growing season.

Doors open at 7 PM and the meeting begins at 7:30. So be on time, as the presentations begin the evening program.

MAIANTHEMUM DILATATUM

(False lily of the Valley)

by Jill Gould

The Latin name is quite a mouthful; the common name is more often used.



This is a woodland plant, preferring deep shade; it does not mind wet soil. It is a common ground cover in coastal temperate rain forests and is native to the Comox Valley. The range extends from Northern California up to Alaska and the Aleutian Islands.

The common name refers to the leaves, which resemble somewhat Lily-of-the-Valley. The flower stalk however is not similar: a raceme of star-shaped white flowers, with a faint pleasant scent.

After flowering, the plant tends to “disappear” (spring ephemeral).

It is becoming popular as a ground cover, being tolerant of wet areas or drought, and deep shade. It can also tolerate areas under spruce trees, where often nothing else will thrive. The plant spreads through

underground rhizomes. Care should be taken as it can become invasive in confined areas. It performs best when allowed to travel through a mulched bed or a woodland garden.

Having said that, I found it popped up naturally in a gravel and paver path alongside the greenhouse in a dry site, competing with mature spruce tree roots. I have let it have its way, as it is attractive and in that area, I do not consider it invasive.

The berries start out with red speckles. Another common name is "snakeberry". When ripe, berries are entirely red. They are not poisonous, and were in fact eaten by some First Nations people, but were not considered choice.

All in all, a pretty plant with few bad habits. Worth keeping if you have it, and worth planting if you have a place for it.



THE RHODO IN THE BANNER

The selection of the Rhodo in the Banner this month was sadly easy. I have heard that Lee's Scarlet was Phil Matthew's favourite rhodo and that's very easy to believe because he had bragged about his early-blooming rhodo to me more than once. He loved it. To me Lee's Scarlet was always a beautiful harbinger of better days ahead but now it will forever remind me of our departed friend. For you Phil.





Lee's Scarlet

This 4 ft rhodo is not only hardy but is an extremely early bloomer. The rosy crimson trusses tell you spring is on its way before most other rhodos are even thinking of blooming. For an added bonus it has thinly plastered indumentum on the leaf undersides.