



THE APRIL 2019 EDITION
RHODOTELLER

www.nirsrhodos.ca

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RHODODENDRON SOCIETY
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APRIL 2019

COMING EVENTS

2nd April 2019 -- Executive meeting

This month's meeting will be held at the home of Judy Walker, 146 Gage Rd. Remember to park on Gage Rd please. Very little parking at the house.

The meeting will start at **10 a.m.**

9th April 2019 -- Regular meeting

One of our own stepping up again as our Speaker with what promises to be a very interesting talk packed with visual delights. Our speaker this month is Judi Murakami with her topic "Bremen Conference 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.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the North Island Rhododendron Society will be held on Tuesday 14th May 2019 at Nadine Boudreau's garden, 3782 Meredith Drive 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 2019/20.

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 Maureen Denny or Nominations Chair Judi Murakami.

AN INVITATION FOR A SPRING GARDEN TOUR

Sunday April 14th 1:30 p.m.

387 Wireless Road,

Comox, B.C.

My favourite day of the year is coming on fast. No, not Christmas -- the Members Spring Tour of Robert Argall's garden! You will be treated to a spring garden like no other -- so many shrubs and trees in bloom, along with several thousand bulbs dressed in every colour in nature's palette. And just when you think you can't take anymore, you will be invited into the house for High Tea and an array of pastries that will make your head explode. Rain or shine, please don't miss out on this exciting invitation.

PRESIDENT'S NOTES

Spring has arrived! We just need some rain and fortunately, if the weather channel is can be trusted, it should rain in the latter part of this week.

Last Thursday, Jake and I attended the ARS District One Presidents' meeting. For those of you who are new to the NIRS, all chapters of the ARS are members of a district. These districts then comprise the body of the ARS. In District One there are seven chapters. To find out more about this structure and visit each chapter's website Google www.rhodos.ca This website is a real Rhodoland of information and fun and so informative to browse.

The meeting we just attended was held at the beautiful oceanfront home and garden of Sean Rafferty and Brenda McDonald, located 5kms north of Shirley, which is north of Sooke. Quite a trek, but well worth it as we had a chance to stroll through their garden full of species rhodos planted at the forest edge, and in a sloping garden right down to the ocean. A creek bordered one side of the property where otters sometimes play. Cougars have also visited!

District meetings are a lively affair held twice a year in March and August. Each chapter presents a report outlining their news, concerns and events. Lunch is included and there is usually a garden to visit. Attending these meetings is a great way to get a larger overview of the workings of the ARS, Districts and Chapters.

Here are some highlights from this meeting.

An update regarding the upcoming ARS Conference "Rhodos as the World Warms." This conference will take place September 27, 28, 29, 2019 and be held at the Parksville Community Conference Center. It will feature International Speakers. The website will be open for registration April 2nd or 3rd. Sign up early as space is limited. To view, visit www.marsrhodos.ca

Jonny Larsen, our Norwegian speaker last month, is hoping to visit Vancouver Island in the spring of 2020. I guess he was so impressed with the rhodo clubs here and the enthusiastic club members he wants to return. Ken Webb pointed out that having these international visitors builds bonds with rhodo folks around the world and inspires the growth of the ARS.

There was a discussion about the closure of many of the rhododendron wholesale nurseries in the Fraser Valley and how this is affecting the variety and quality of plants available to retail nurseries and various Chapters' annual plant sales.

These meetings are open to any member of the NIRS who is thinking of stepping up their involvement with our club. Let me know if you would like to come along next August.

The busiest time for the NIRS is upon us. Our two main events of the year, our major fund raisers, are just around the corner. The Annual Plant Sale will be held April 28th. The Annual Mother's Day Garden Tour will be held Sunday, May 12. Plus, there are various positions becoming vacant in our club's Executive and Director Positions. Get your volunteer energy going!

Maureen

COMMITTEE REPORTS

MEMBERSHIP

Nadine Boudreau

The March meeting was busy! With hosting a renowned international speaker, we had 69 members in attendance and had 11 guests join us. We thought we were going to have a slower night for renewals and membership but the opposite happened. We had 4 renewals for March and we were pleasantly surprised to have 5 new memberships! Welcome Patty Molz, Lynne Ray, Judy Chrysler, Harriet Nowicki, and Bette Hopwood.

THE RHODO GARDEN

Maureen Denny



Last month's first work party of the year went well, with about six members attending to clean up the winter mess. The weather was just warm enough to have coffee and snacks outside at the picnic table. Noni took care of fertilizing all the rhododendrons, while the rest of us raked, pruned and weeded. **The next work party will be April 11th at 10am.** Please bring your garden tools and a bucket.



*A Squatter with Impeccable Taste
(photo by Nadine Boudreau)*

WAYS & MEANS

Claudia Ellis

OUR RAFFLE RHODOS THIS MONTH ARE:

'**Snow Lady**' 3', -18C. Its soft fuzzy green leaves dress it up like a real lady. Flowers well in deep shade. Much appreciated because it buds easily and blooms early..

'**Isola Bella**' 5', -21C. Funnel shaped flowers opening very pale purple and aging to yellowish-white with faint pink blush at lobe centres and faint yellow to green spotting.

OUR DOOR PRIZE IS:

R. oreotrephes 5', -18C. Prolific flowering species, upright and compact. Bell shaped flowers range in colour from mauve to mauve-pink. A striking glaucous cast occurs on the foliage, stems and buds.



'Snow Lady'



'Isola Bella'



R. oreotrephes

THE PROGRAMME

APRIL 2019



For our April 9th meeting, NIRS Past President **Judi Murakami** will present a colourful presentation of gardens toured in Bremen, Germany last spring while attending the 2018 ARS Convention.

THE GREETER

by Jill Gould

What fun this has been! As the unofficial "Official Greeter", I have had the privilege of talking to everyone coming into our meeting. Boy are we a social bunch. Of course, we have such great speakers.

Having a greeter at the door takes a lot of work off Nadine and Lois, at our Membership table. It enables us to make sure members and guests sign in, which gives them a chance at our "door prize Rhododendron". We keep track of the attendance on a very informal basis. The greeter also has a chance to welcome guests, many of whom may become future members (which happened at our March meeting).

But travel calls, and I will not be able to make the next meeting. Can someone step into my place for April? I guarantee you will find it enjoyable!

Need a ride to one of our meetings?



Call Sue at 250-331-1013
or send her an email at grant.sk@gmail.com

VISITORS FROM NORWAY

...by Dave Godfrey

On Monday, March 11th, Garth Wedemire and Sue Grant met our special guests Ole Jonny Larsen and his wife, Kari, who travelled all the way from their home in Ålesund, Norway. Meeting them at the Nanaimo ferry, Garth & Sue escorted them to our beautiful Comox Valley where they graciously hosted them for two nights.

Jonny is a retired teacher from a Norwegian state school. In his retired life he's an addicted collector of plants, admitting that his favourites are Rhododendron species. He is the President of the Norwegian Rhododendron Society and has one of Norway's biggest private collections of the genus.

Since the Larsen's were here a day in advance of our meeting date, we had the opportunity to show them some of the beauty around our communities during the day.

Our tour began on a crisp and clear Tuesday morning, meeting at the crevice gardens in the Comox Marina Park. NIRS member Dany Fortin, an employee with the Comox Parks Department, explained the process of building the two crevice garden areas and some of the alpine plants they contain. He also showed them some of the many other unusual trees growing around the park.



Dany and several other NIRS members then travelled to the Filberg Park for a tour of the gardens. Although the gardens were dormant for the season, Jonny & Kari could see their potential and some of the unusual plants they contain. They were also able to enjoy some of the spectacular views across to Goose Spit and the Beaufort Mountain Range.



A scenic drive through the Town of Comox, crossing the 17th Street Bridge led us to showcase our own Comox Valley Rhododendron Garden. It was then across to the White Spot restaurant on Cliffe Avenue for an enjoyable lunch and visit.

Following lunch, Noni & Dave Godfrey toured the Larsens through downtown Courtenay, crossing the historic 5th Street Bridge and up Ryan Road. At the top of Ryan Road, we showed them the Air

Force base, the RCAF Heritage Museum's Air Park and the Civilian Air Terminal. We then drove around to Kye Bay where they were treated to a spectacular view of the mainland's coastal mountains.

Passing Point Holmes on the way back to the Wedemire home, Jonny & Kari were once again in awe of all the beauty that surrounds our communities.



Back at the house, it was time for them to rest up and take a nap before joining several club members for a pre-meeting dinner.



That evening, at the standing room only meeting, Jonny gave his presentation on his experiences as an amateur plant hunter in the Himalayas. As a bonus, Jonny also told the history of Jean Rasmussen, known primarily as the wife of the great plant hunter Frank Kingdon-Ward, and her connection to Norway. Both were very informative presentations.

We were pleased for the opportunity to host such a prestigious guest speaker as Ole Jonny Larsen; as were the other District 1 chapters. We wished them well and invited them to return another year - during the blooming season.

(Note: Addition photos will be posted to our NIRS website's "Photographs - Special Gallery" soon.)

PLANT SALE 2019

28th April

By 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 in the parking lot or the neighbouring properties!

Thanks to Diana Scott, our volunteer co-ordinator; most volunteer positions are filled. 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.

Again this year we ask that 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!

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

Members Only Rhododendron Pre Sale: Hosted by the propagating group at the Smith's garden 1717 Glen Urquhart Drive (On Back Rd, turn up 10th St. East, Glen Urquhart is the first road on right. Go to the end of the road and drive slowly thru a small park) Date: Saturday 13th April 2019 **from Noon to 2:00 pm.**

MOTHER'S DAY GARDEN TOUR

GATE SITTERS

May 12th 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!

MILNER GARDENS

Spring Plant Sale

April 27 to April 28, 2019

10:00 am - 4:00 pm

The Annual Spring Plant Sale offers heritage plants propagated by Milner Garden volunteers at great prices! Master Gardeners will also be on hand to answer your gardening questions.

Special winter season admission applies to the Annual Spring Plant Sale, please see [Hours & Admissions](#). Member's Only Early Access Spring Plant Sale will be held on Friday April 26, 2019 from 5:00 pm - 6:30 pm. Please show your current Milner Gardens Membership card to the volunteers at the Welcome & Interpretive Centre. Milner Gardens Memberships may be purchased and renewed at this time.

THE RHODO IN THE BANNER

R. 'BUTTER BRICKLE'

(photo by Garth Wedemire)



There comes a time in life when you just get tired of that ever-dependable "little black dress" and reach out for something a little more daring. Maybe the red strapless number showing a little too much leg? Then in the world of rhododendrons you're ready for a Lofthouse. Something frilly and full of colour. Why not try on R. 'Butter Brickle'?

The predominantly funnel-shaped frilly flowers have light yellow edges which darken to brilliant yellow towards the centre, with 1/2" star-shaped vivid red blotching in the throat and spotting. This really is a beautiful compact plant, but with Hotei and Lem's Cameo as parents what can you expect? Growing to 3 feet and hardy to -18 deg C and showing new bronze-coloured growth, this and many more Lofthouse rhododendrons should be considered for your garden wardrobe.

Good gardening and I'll see you at the Church Hall on 9th April 2019