



THE FEBRUARY 2019 EDITION

RHODOTELLER

www.nirsrhodos.ca

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FEBRUARY 2019

COMING EVENTS

5th February 2019 -- Executive meeting

This month's meeting will be held at the home of our **Past-President Judi Murakami**.

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

12th February 2019 -- Regular meeting

Our guest speaker for the February 12th meeting will be NIRS Associate member **John Deniseger** of Bowser, as he presents, "Why Do I Garden?"

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

Well it seems very early that my annual case of 'Gardener's Spring Fever' has already started. I must keep reminding myself that it is actually still January. I think that with the warm winter weather we have had so far this year, some plants are about a month ahead of themselves. I say "so far" because who knows? We could still get a snowfall and cold weather.

With spring lurking, I must get my Felco pruners ready. Wolfgang's talk on tool care at our last meeting was inspiring and helpful, showing us how to keep our tools in tip top shape. I plan on taking my pruners completely apart, giving them a good cleaning, oiling and sharpening.

Meanwhile the primroses are definitely putting on new spring growth, the odd one even has a small bloom. The garlic has sprouted. Snowdrops are really blooming. A wonderful winter bloomer is the Winter Jasmine, *Jasminun nudiflorum*. I like that species name. Does it mean blooming in the nude? Actually, nudiflorum refers to the fact that the solitary yellow flowers appear on bare stems. I have a young plant in my garden, but if you want to see a big one there is a magnificent plant blooming on the wall of the old Filberg House in Comox.

It is not too early to think about the Mother's Day Garden Tour next May 12. This year's tour will center in Courtenay. It would be wonderful this year to have some new gardens to show. See me or Noni if you would like to volunteer your garden or know of someone else who would.

Also don't forget to take pictures of your garden for next January's "Member's Photo Night".

See you at the meeting February 12th.

Maureen

COMMITTEE REPORTS

MEMBERSHIP

Nadine Boudreau

Our January meeting was well attended with 51 members and 8 guests.

We have 79 members for 2019 so far, and welcome any new members or renewals at our meetings or through the mail. Check out our website for mailing information.

Jill Gould is taking names of those wishing to order a name tag. Check with Jill on the cost as this can depend on the style of tag. Jill is usually at the door greeting us as we enter the hall. We encourage you to have a name tag so we can remember each other's names as we get to know each other and also gives you an extra ticket for the raffle draw.

Thank you to all who have renewed.

WAYS & MEANS

Claudia Ellis

OUR RAFFLE RHODOS THIS MONTH ARE:

'Hello Dolly' 3', -23C. Another outstanding hybrid by Halfdan Lem. Yellow flowers brightened with tones of orange and rose. Large calyx. Rounded plant with medium green leaves and lt. beige indumentum.

'Lord Roberts' 5', -26C. Vigorous, rounded, upright plant. Glossy green foliage. Flower deep red with black blotch.

OUR DOOR PRIZE IS:

Azalea 'Blue Danube' 2', -20C. Intense large violet-blue flowers with deeper purple-red spotting.



'Hello Dolly'



'Lord Roberts'



Azalea 'Blue Danube'

Help Wanted

Claudia needs an assistant for the February, March and April meetings. Easy job and a super way to meet the other members of our club. Give Claudia a call at 250-702-1416 or just report for duty at the next meeting.

The NIRS 2019 Yearbook will be available for distribution to members at the February and March meetings.

THE REVENUE TABLE

Naomi and Judy



It's almost spring for all you gardeners out there, and that means bringing in plants for the revenue table! It's a good time to divide and pot on plants- and share with your friends. As well as plants, any gardening related items are welcomed. All funds raised by the revenue table sales support activities by the NIRS members.

Thank you from Naomi & Judy

THE RHODO GARDEN

Maureen Denny



Weather permitting, the first work party at the CVRG will be on **Valentine's Day, February 14th at 10am**. Please bring your pruners, rake, bucket, loppers as we will do some pruning of dead wood on the rhodos and general clean up. These work parties are fun!

Goodies are always appreciated.

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

THE PROGRAMME

by Dave Godfrey

SEEKING MEMBER INPUT!

We have our program schedule completed for the remainder of this term; until we wrap up for the summer with our annual June potluck picnic. However, we are seeking your input regarding speakers or topics which would interest you for our future programs beginning this fall.

At the January meeting, we had some survey slips prepared for members to fill out. However, very few were taken, and none were returned. Please give some thought as to what interests you for future meetings and let us know as soon as possible. We need to start booking now for the fall.

Garth Wedemire and I have been organizing the program for the past few years, but feel it is time for others to become involved. The Nanaimo chapter handles these program duties by a small committee. Four or five knowledgeable members seek speakers for the various months throughout the year. The committee member suggesting the speaker makes all travel, dinner and accommodation arrangements and introductions, where necessary. This helps spread the workload from those who have been doing it for years.

So far, Judy Walker is the only other NIRS member who has volunteered to join the committee. If you feel you might like to become part of this committee, please let me know soon.

PHOTO NIGHT COMING!

We are planning to have a Members' Photo Night at next January's meeting. We ask our members to consider submitting some photos taken during the various seasons. Pictures you took that showcase your garden or plants, special photos that you took on garden tours or in someone else's garden, etc., are all welcome. ***This is not a contest!*** We'd just love to show your photos at our Photo Night!

Whether it is a photo of a single truss, a whole rhododendron plant, special foliage, companion plant or just a garden scene, please help us put together the best presentation possible. Email your digital photos to Garth Wedemire with "NIRS Photo Night" in the subject line. You can also explain in the text of your email the name of the rhododendron, plant or scene, if known.

We would like to see photos taken and submitted during the four seasons of the year. Submit photos as email attachments at any time. The closing date for each season's entries will be by the following schedule: Winter entries - March 21, 2019; Spring entries - June 21, 2019; Summer entries - September 21, 2019 and Fall entries - December 21, 2019. This will help us to avoid a log jam of entries in December and allow us to select photographs and prepare the presentation as the year progresses.

So, don't be shy, dust off your camera or iPhone and start snapping while the winter season is still here. Don't miss this chance to share your photos!

RHODOS RESCUED!

by Dave Godfrey

It would seem our chapter's moniker - N.I.R.S. (North Island Rhododendron Society) might also stand for 'North Island Rescue Society' following the unusually heavy snow fall on Tuesday, January 8th, 2019.

On January 10th, President Maureen Denny received a call from Tyler Johns of the Courtenay Parks Department to advise that a couple of large rhodos were down in the Comox Valley Rhododendron Garden (CVRG). Upon investigation, Maureen called Wolfgang Hoefgen and Noni & Dave Godfrey to help try to recover these plants.



We arrived at 10 am on Friday to find one of the rhodos by the front wall lying on its side. With a pruning saw and heavy loppers, Wolfgang removed several lower branches which allowed us to right the plant and secure it back in place.

Unfortunately, the shape of the plant ('Catawbiense Album') has been severely altered and will need additional pruning after it blooms in the spring.



Likewise, a second rhodo in the BOVI bed, originally believed to be 'Fiona Christie' but now thought to be 'Anna Rose Whitney', was pushed over under the weight of the wet snow. It too was righted to its original position, tied and propped up until spring, when it will likely be removed.



In all, the short work party took less than an hour to complete and the plants now stand a much better chance of survival.



SPRING SUNDAYS AT VIU'S MILNER GARDENS AND WOODLAND

Sundays February 3rd to March 24th

Enjoy the early Spring bulbs in this peaceful setting.

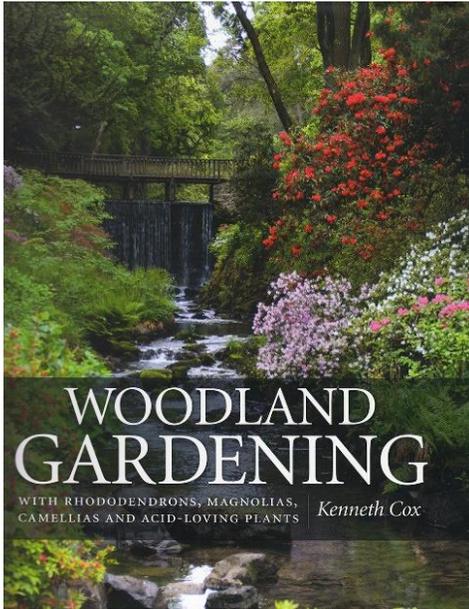
Garden open 11:00am to 3:30pm, last entry 3:00pm.

Tea Room open 11:00am for tea, soup and scones with last seating 3:00pm.

Admission adults \$6, youth \$4 includes tax. Children 12 and under accompanied by an adult free.

A BOOK REVIEW

by Noni Godfrey



Woodland Gardening: Landscaping with Rhododendrons, Magnolias & Camellias

by Kenneth Cox. Pub. Glendoick Publishing, Glendoick Gardens, Perth PH2 7NS Scotland 2018.

(NIRS Library #40-36)

Have you ever wanted to just sit down with a coffee table style book with colour photos of woodland gardens from all over the world? Well, this is the book for you!

“Woodland Gardening” is a horticultural style with its origins in the eighteenth-century English landscape movement, combining informal design with spectacular exotic plants such as rhododendrons, magnolias and camellias. From the nineteenth century onwards, European and North American gardens became increasingly filled with oriental plants, and the woodland gardening style was adopted and adapted worldwide.

This book documents the history of woodland gardening and describes and illustrates many of the world’s finest woodland gardens and recommends the

best selection of plants to grow in them. This book also contains inspiring design and planning ideas from the world’s best examples of this style of gardening along with more than 500 colour photographs.

- History of woodland gardening, plant-hunters and hybridizers.
- Inspirational woodland gardens from around the world: just some examples include Inverewe, Scotland; Longwood Gardens, USA; the Bremen Rhododendron Park, Germany; Pukeiti, New Zealand; and The Emu Valley, Tasmania.
- Design and features of woodland gardens: borrowed landscape, water, bridges, colour planning, year-round interest, scent and autumn colour.
- Climate, planting and maintenance, including restoration of overgrown woodland gardens.
- Woodland gardening challenges and disorders: climate change, cold, pests and disease.
- Woodland garden plants: inspirational planting ideas, combinations and the best magnolias, rhododendrons, camellias, hydrangeas, bulbs and woodland perennials.
- Woodland gardens: a look into the future.

The book is divided into sections and is easy to jump forward or backward into areas of interest:

Part I – History, and evolution of woodland gardening around the world.

Part II–The Big Picture: Designing a Woodland Garden.

Part III – The Practical Stuff: Soil, maintenance, weeds, pests, diseases etc.

Part IV – Plants for Woodland Gardens: Trees and shrubs; understory perennials and bulbs.

Part V – The Greatest Woodland Gardens

“There is no love that will remain with us throughout our life like the love of gardening...it will permeate our whole being...the age of an individual does not matter.”by Euan Cox, The Evolution of a Garden, 1927

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uL4BrMb9DMY>

WEBSITES FOR RHODODENDRON INFORMATION

by Garth Wedemire

This month, we feature “Singing Tree Gardens Nursery” website. Sue and I visited this nursery during the ARS National Convention in April 2017 and were very impressed.

<https://www.singtree.com/about-the-nursery>



Don Wallace, one of the cofounders of this Nursery is often a featured speaker and participant in Hybridizer’s Round Table events at ARS Conventions and Conferences. The home page describes the nursery in the following way:

“We are a small specialty plant nursery growing on the Dow’s Prairie near McKinleyville, California. An important goal for us has been, and is, to give back to the earth by inspiring people to grow plants.”

We really liked the “Inspiration” page which states:

“We hope you get inspired to plant a new bed or garden. Below are many of the gardens that have inspired us to want to create more plant displays that might encourage more creativity and beauty in the world.”

The website features 13 gardens that have inspired “Singing Tree”. Beautiful pictures and descriptions are included on this long page.



MORE WORTHY WEBSITES FOR RHODODENDRON INFORMATION

by Garth Wedemire



ARS Office www.arsoffice.org
Online Journals (25 of them since Fall of 2012)

Marc Columbel's website www.rhododendron.fr
Fast Navigation → Classification (1998) → Grandia → macabe anum

Hirsutum Website www.hirsutum.info
Rhododendron hybrids → H → Hotei (Nancy Evans)

ARS District 1 www.rhodos.ca

District 1 (7 Chapters) www.rhodos.ca/chapters.html

North Island Chapter www.nirsrhodos.ca

THE RHODO IN THE BANNER



R. RIRIEI

(both photos from hirsutum.com)



An older rhododendron, *R. ririei* has been in cultivation since 1904. A very early bloomer, I recently observed this rhodo just starting to show a little colour in Paul and Lynn's garden. According to hirsutum.com, *R. ririei* was named after Rev. B. Ririe of the Chinese Inland Missions and a friend of E.H. Wilson. Mr. Wilson was a notable English plant collector and explorer who introduced a large range of about 2000 Asian plant species to the West; some sixty of those bear his name. Sometime when you have a moment Google his name. Very interesting story. And maybe look up *Rhododendron ririei* for further information.

P.S.

1. Judi Murakami sent me some info and beautiful photos of Japan's Winter Peonies. These Peonies were brought to Japan from China and their cultivation became widespread. A symbol of fertility and nobility, ordinarily peonies flower in April and May. However, in Japan, there is an interesting variety called Kan-botan or Fuyu-botan meaning "winter peonies". For more info and remarkable photos please Google 'Japan's winter peonies' or <https://press.ikidane-nippon.com/en/see/37880>.
2. With the weather about to cool a bit and at least a chance of snow. don't forget to take some photos of your garden for our meeting next January. There's something special about a rhodo (or other plants) showing some colour with a light blanket of snow.
3. When Spring finally arrives, don't forget to pot up any perennials, or other companion plants, for the NIRS table at our plant sale on Sunday April 28th.
4. We are still looking for gardens of interest in the Courtenay area to showcase for our Annual Mother's Day Garden Tour on Sunday May 12th. If you would like your garden, or know of one for consideration, please contact Noni Godfrey, Maureen Denny, or Carolyn Chester. (Phone numbers and email address can be found in the NIRS 2019 Yearbook)

Good gardening and I'll see you at the church on 12th February 2019.