

THE RHODOTELLER



Classic Christmas Colours of "Grace Seabrook" - photo taken at Al and Liz Murray's garden on Cobble Hill (south of Duncan) on May 3, 2018 by Garth Wedemire

President's View

By the time you read this, December will be upon us and soon the days will begin to grow longer. Right now though, the days are short and some of us are still busy cleaning up from the many leaves dropped from the trees. It has taken me several days of blowing and raking to gather up most of our tree leaves. But there are still some stubborn ones to drop!

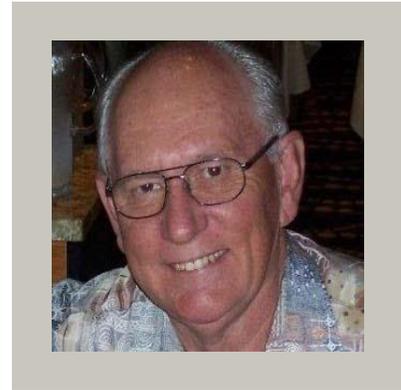
It was interesting to see a dozen of our NIRS members join the special Zoom presentation on Nov. 18th. Steve Hootman gave a talk on his "2017 Plant Hunting Expedition to Northern Vietnam." Members from six of the District 1 chapters plus a few from the Californian DeAnza chapter tuned in, for a total of 97 members. It is anticipated that we will be enjoying more of these presentations in coming months.

For those who missed Steve's presentation, or for those who wish to view it again, it was recorded by Glen Jamieson to a YouTube video. We have posted a link on our website's home page or Click [this link to view the video](#). Enjoy!

The clock is ticking! We hope that many more of you will submit your membership dues for 2021. At the time of writing, only about 50% have renewed. So please consider continuing your membership for another year to support the future of our club and the ARS society.

For now, we hope that all our members and their families have a safe and healthy holiday season. And as Dr. Henry says: *“Be kind, be calm and be safe!”*

By Dave Godfrey



NIRS Christmas Hamper 2020

Each year at this time, our club supports a Christmas hamper for a local family in need. This year is particularly hard for many families given the current pandemic. Since we won't be meeting for our annual Christmas party, where non-perishable items could be donated by those members who wish to help, we have an option to provide cash donations which will go directly towards supporting the family chosen. As we have done in the past, the executive has budgeted \$75 towards this project. The organizing group for the hampers will use any monies donated to buy food and other items to help the family through the holiday period.

Once again, members can donate any amount through an e-transfer to our club treasurer Noni Godfrey at nonigod@shaw.ca. Noni will in turn e-transfer the money from the NIRS to the hamper committee. If you prefer to send a cheque to N.I.R.S., please do so by mailing to our club's address. But please let Noni know by email to confirm all amounts being donated. Monies for the hamper need to be forwarded to the hamper committee by **Dec 15th at the latest**. Thank you to members who have already donated and to those who are willing to help.

Merry Christmas to all from Diane Van Oostdam and Maureen Denny, NIRS Hamper Committee

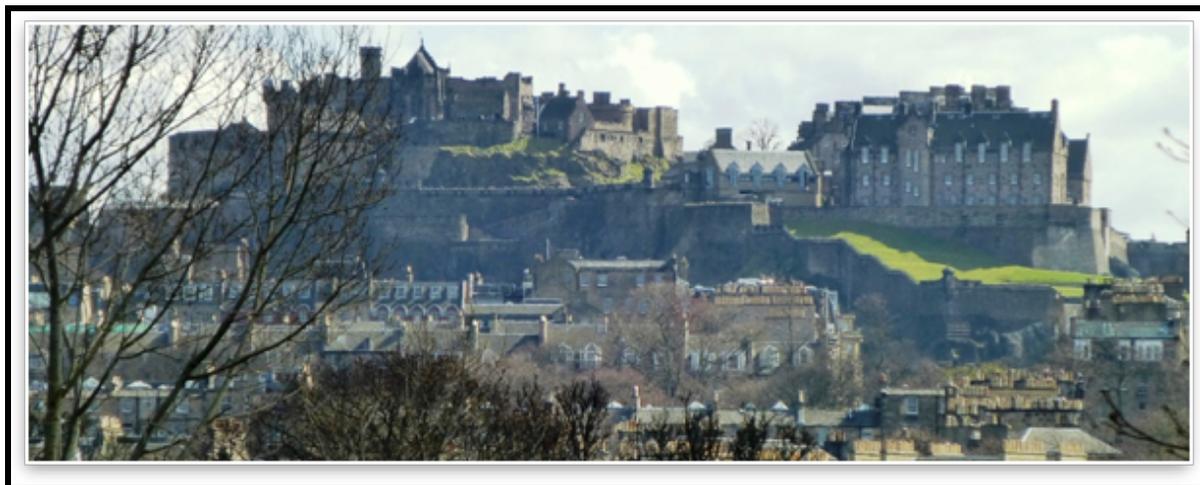
Meetings

Regular monthly meetings and other events have been cancelled until further notice due to COVID-19, however, there will be some meetings on Zoom.

The December executive meeting has been **cancelled**. January TBA

Steve Hootman Special Zoom Presentation Dec. 17

As a special 'thank you' for our chapter's donation to the RSBG back in June, interested NIRS members have been invited to view another presentation by Steve Hootman (Executive Director of the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden in Federal Way, WA) on Thursday, Dec 17th at 5 PM – ***“From Cumbria to Argyll: A Plantsman’s tour of some of the finest gardens in northern England and Scotland.”***



This event normally costs US\$15 to US\$20 each, but because of our donation they are permitting our members to join for **free**. An email with a joining link and information will be sent to our participating members closer to the date. Please let us know if you need technical assistance.

If you would like to join the event, please let Dave know as soon as possible.

Fun Fact

December originally was the 10th month of the year under the Roman calendar and got its name from the Latin word *decem*, which means 10.

Membership Renewal

Our 'Early Renewal Program' has come to a close. As of the end of November, we still have 36 memberships outstanding for 2021. It is easy to renew by e-transfer to club treasurer nongod@shaw.ca or drop your \$35 cheque payable to N.I.R.S. into the mail at our club's address (P.O. Box 3183, Courtenay, BC, V9N 5N4).

Those members not renewed by December 31st will not be included in the 2021 yearbook roster and may risk not receiving your copy; nor the ARS Journal Winter issue. So please, don't delay – renew today!

The draw for those members whose dues received by November 30th will be made by executive on Dec. 8th (even though there is no meeting or party that day) and the winner announced in an email to follow. Good luck and stay safe.

Thank you from Dan & Margaret

The Comox Valley Rhodo Garden



A sincere thanks to everyone who attended the work parties at the CVRG over this past year. I think we have all enjoyed the work, the camaraderie and team effort put forth to keep the gardens healthy and beautiful. Since the cancellation of our regular meetings, the work parties have been the only chance for members of the club to get together as a group. As always, we have fun while we work.

A few changes were made to the gardens over the past season. Any Rhododendrons that were not doing well have been removed. Some of these were old and unsightly, one was infected with lacebugs. We are also no longer removing the leaf litter under the plants or applying Rhodo food or bark mulch. These changes follow the recommendations of Steve Hootman whose advice was that the rhodos get all the nutrients they need from the leaves as they break down. At this time, the rhodos seem to be doing very well, and all are covered with buds for next spring.

Now let us all hope for an early spring. I see some snowdrop shoots starting to emerge already in my garden. I hope everyone stays healthy and happy throughout this strange winter we have ahead of us.

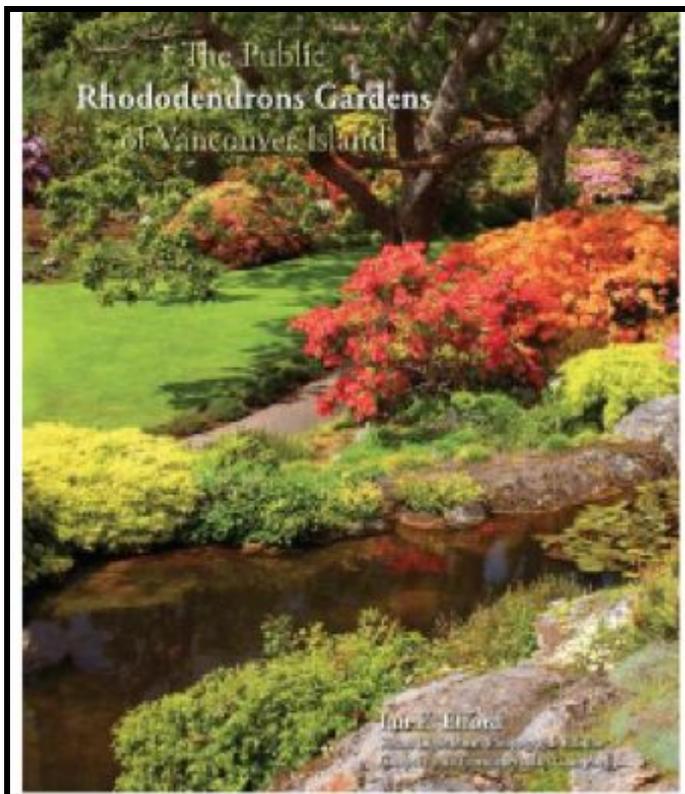
I hope everyone has a safe and healthy winter.

Maureen

Looking for a Christmas Gift?

We have two great books available for sale at a special reduced price of \$15.00 each.

1. **The Public Rhododendrons Gardens of Vancouver Island.** (Book store price is \$29.95)



For the average gardener or tourist public gardens and parks are readily accessible places to see rhododendrons. This book describes nearly 30 public gardens and parks which have collections of rhododendrons. They differ widely; some are public parks, some are focused on horticulture and have identification labels on each plant, and still others have the rhododendrons growing in almost wild forest conditions.

There are about 150 photographs of the gardens and of named rhododendrons. All except a handful have been taken by the garden owners or rhododendron enthusiasts.

The reader will gain an understanding of rhododendrons on the island, and an enthusiasm to visit some of the parks and gardens and glimpse the reason so many

gardeners love this interesting genus.

Maps are included for each area showing the location of gardens and of other interesting features along the route. Overall the book is a source of information and a tour book for gardeners or for anyone who might like a guide when visiting the island.



2. **Greer's Guidebook to Available Rhododendrons** (Amazon price is \$39.00 plus tax)

A great resource book. It contains an abundance of well-organized information and the basics. The photography is excellent.

Our sale price now \$15.00

Call Valerie or Aubrey Ferris to arrange for pick up.

For your online reading pleasure...

Rhodo Weather Protection - Advice from the American Rhodo Society

Damage to rhododendron and azalea leaves and buds can occur at low temperatures. Exposure to cold can cause dry, brown areas on leaves and brown-colored buds. Sometimes new plant growth may not have had sufficient time to harden off before cold weather sets in and may be killed. Give the plant plenty of time to send out new growth as temperatures warm before pruning off the damage. Warm temperatures followed by a quick freeze, such as early freeze in the Fall or a late freeze in the Spring can be more damaging than a gradual drop in temperature. Read more at <https://www.rhododendron.org/protection.htm>

And tons more rhodo topics at <https://www.rhododendron.org/articles.htm>

Firesmart Guide to Landscaping

<https://firesmartcanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/328254-PIP-Landscape-low-res.pdf>

Wild About Birds - feeding advice from Canadian Wildlife Federation

Small birds need high energy foods to survive in a variety of outdoor conditions year round. When buying bird seed be sure to pick blends made up mainly of oil seeds like niger, sunflower or canola. Avoid blends with grains like wheat or oats and corn. Different seeds provide different nutrients so try to find a blend with a few different oil seeds.

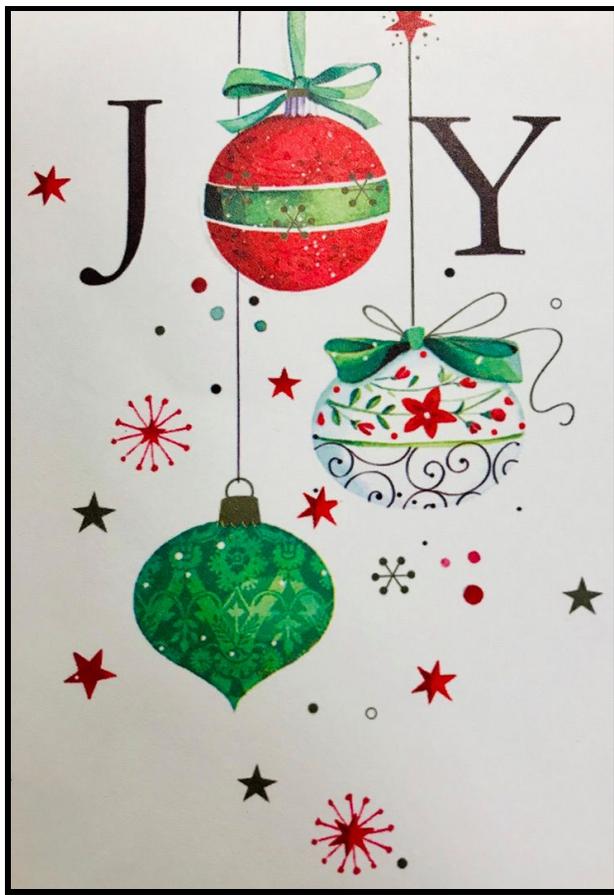
Planting is an excellent way to ensure you meet the needs of all kinds of birds throughout the seasons. Planting and nurturing a variety of native perennials, shrubs and trees provides natural food and shelter. Feeders allow you to supplement your plantings with a greater diversity of food and are a great way to see birds up close.

Read more at <https://cwf-fcf.org/en/explore/wild-about-birds/at-home/tips.html>

And a related topic **Why Garden for Wildlife?**

...in our own green space - incorporating a variety of plants and natural elements to create habitat, using earth-friendly or 'green' practices and including regionally native plants.

<https://cwf-fcf.org/en/explore/gardening-for-wildlife/how/why-garden-for-wildlife.html>



"Taurus" 2006 photo by Garth Wedemire

*Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays,
Hoping you find Joy throughout the season,
Best wishes for a healthy and happy New Year!*

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Newsletter submission deadline is the 25th of each month. Don't be shy - any members may submit photos, articles, notices, etc.

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https://www.facebook.com/North-Island-Rhododendron-Society-453003651572973/?view_public_for=453003651572973



“Rubicon” photo by Garth Wedemire April 30, 2005