

THE RHODOTELLER



R. 'Jim's Blueberry Jam' by Garth Wedemire

President's View

by Dave Godfrey

It is hard to believe that another term is coming to an end. With this issue our newsletter editor Kathy Haigh will be taking a couple of months R&R before we begin again in September. Thank you, Kathy, for your time and effort to keep us informed and entertained during the past season.

As I reported at the AGM, we are extremely fortunate to have had so many members willing to help during this most difficult of terms. Garth has been kept busy processing and publishing the many wonderful photos members are submitting to our website's "What's Blooming" gallery. Please keep the photos coming throughout the summer and we will keep sharing them for others to enjoy.

I also thanked Wolfgang and Antje from our propagation group for their many hours tending to our hundreds of potted rhododendrons. Thanks to their efforts our plants are looking gorgeous and healthy. These will bring us much needed revenue at future sales.

Speaking of sales, we must thank Carolyn and Naomi for hosting another 'Members Only' plant sale in their driveway. With the success of last summer's sale, we hope that this year's sale will equal or better the amount raised to help keep us financially viable. As Treasurer Noni reported to the AGM, last year's income was almost equal to our reduced expenses, with the nearly \$500

expense overage being primarily the exchange on our dues raised versus the amount in US dollars paid to the ARS.

A big thank you goes out to the members who have been attending the CVRG work parties to help keep the garden maintained and looking its best for the many visitors who enjoy its beauty. Thanks to Maureen for keeping us organized and safe while doing this work. Thanks also to Judy for helping to coordinate with the city for establishing a 'Management Plan' for the garden.

To all our executive members, I thank you for your support and commitment to the society. At the AGM it was confirmed that Carolyn Chester will continue in the position of Secretary, while Noni Godfrey will continue as the club's Treasurer. Aubrey Ferris and Antje Guertler will also remain as Directors for the next two years. I thank you all for your continued support during these uncertain times.

Speaking of uncertainty, it has come to our attention that some rhododendrons and azaleas sold in local garden centres are mislabelled and are not as they are advertised. Unfortunately, the problem comes from the suppliers and not the sellers. Therefore, it is definitely a "Buyer Beware" situation and perhaps make your purchases when plants are in bloom to be sure they are what you were hoping to buy.

Although we will be taking time to relax and enjoy the summer



'Blue Boy' by Barb Staton

months, we still hope that, as more members become vaccinated, we might be able to host a summer garden picnic. Traditionally the potluck picnic has been held in mid-June, but with the current restrictions this will not likely happen. However, if protocols allow, we may consider a mid-summer picnic in July or even August. Instead of the normal potluck supper, we would likely be hosting a "bring your own" picnic; whereby each member brings everything they need for their own meal. Please stay tuned for further announcements via email.

For now, it is time for me to sign off and wish all our members a safe and happy gardening season. It won't be long before we hopefully... "See you in September!"

Silver Medal Award

On the afternoon of Saturday, May 8th, Noni and Dave Godfrey represented the North Island chapter at a small 'surprise' presentation of the ARS Silver medal to June Bouchard and John Deniseger. All Vancouver Island chapters were represented at the 'masked' presentation in the garden of John & June in Bowser.

Well known associate members of the NIRS, the Denisegers are very deserving of this award presented in recognition of their many years of support given to District 1. As active members of the Nanaimo chapter, they have been involved with several Regional and National conferences held in Victoria, Nanaimo and Qualicum as registrars helping to run the registration desk and online registrations, as well as support elsewhere when needed. Both John and June have been involved with the development of the Greig Rhododendron Species garden at Milner Gardens, with John serving on the advisory committee.



The presentation was made by ARS President Ken Webb of Victoria and District Director Glen Jamieson of Parksville/Qualicum. It was video recorded for showing at the 'virtual' ARS Convention in Halifax on June 3 to 6, 2021.

Congratulations June and John from your many friends at NIRS.





'Gletschernacht' by Garth Wedemire

Comox Valley Rhodo Garden Report

By Maureen Denny

The next Work Party will be held on June 10th at 10am. Thanks to all who volunteered last month. We were mostly busy spreading mulch on the BOVI garden bed, and since there was not enough to finish the job, I will be requesting another delivery from Courtenay. There will also be some rhodos that might be ready to deadhead. Seems there will be lots of work to do, so please come and join the effort.

Bring your own tools and buckets and goodies would be appreciated! Work Parties are held throughout the summer months and will be announced via email.



'Ramapo' by Lois Clyde

Comox Valley Garden Signs Replaced

by Dave Godfrey

As some may recall, last summer there were incidents of vandalism at our Comox Valley Rhododendron Garden (CVRG). In addition to several rhododendrons having branches broken or pruned off, several bed signs, including the overall garden map, were spray bombed with graffiti and a couple were bent and twisted in an attempt to rip them from their posts.

The club's executive decided that we needed to have all signs re-made and replaced in time for "May is Rhododendron Month." While discussing the overall management plan with city officials, they kindly offered to cover the cost of having them re-made. We have thanked them for this generous donation.

On Tuesday afternoon on May 4th, Dan Ryan and I carried out the work of installing the signs, including the installation of a new signpost for bed #4. It is our hope that later this year the large wooden sign can be refurbished in time for the 25th anniversary of the garden next summer.





'Blaney's Blue' by Garth Wedemire



'Blue Baron' by Garth Wedemire

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. **[editor's note: 2021 is another bad year for them here.]**

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://duchessof dirt.ca>.



'President' clematis with Blue Delphiniums by Connie Prain

On the Web...

Here is a great site for gardening, pictures, and lots of questions and answers.

[Gardening fanatics on Vancouver Island | Facebook](#)

'Gardeners' World' with Monty Don on Amazon Prime is a fun British show.

[Watch Gardeners' World \(2020\) | Prime Video](#)

Google "When the gardener is an artist photos" and watch the fun in numerous creative images.

ARS Rhododendron Through Your Lens Photo Competition - contest details

https://www.rhododendron.org/next_gen_photocontest.htm

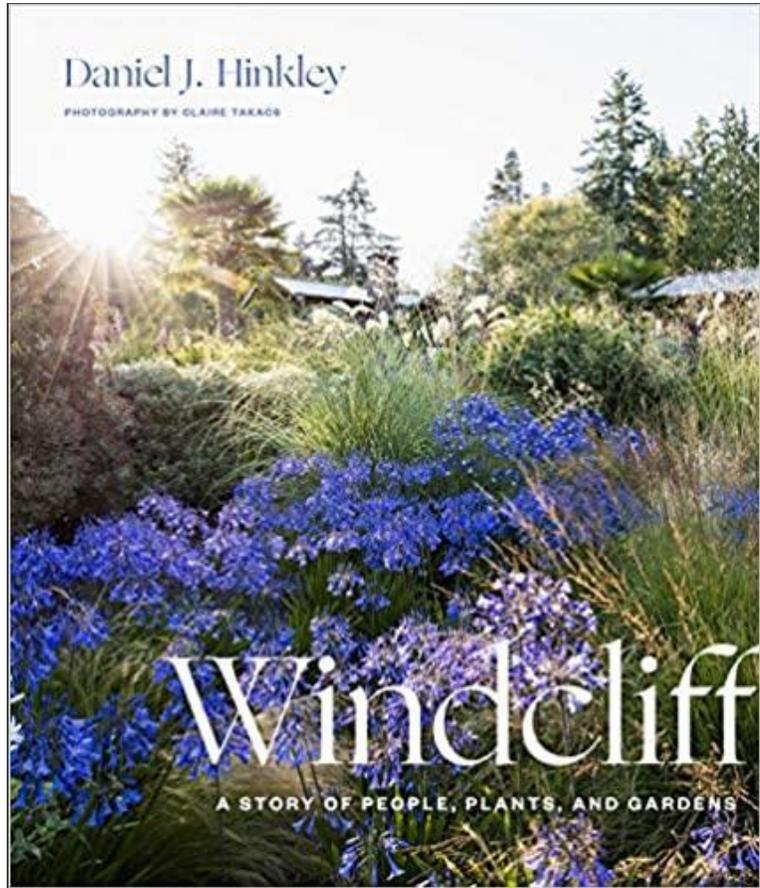
Book Review

by Judith Walker

“Windcliff – A Story of People, Plants and Gardens” by Daniel J. Hinkley; Photography by Claire Takacs. Published in 2020 by Timber Press Inc.

First I have to warn you that there are only two pages where rhododendrons are mentioned but don't let that deter you from discovering a rare and treasured read.

I purchased this based on Hinkley's incredible passion for plant collecting and unsurpassed enthusiasm and bravery in developing a garden, or in his case, two gardens- Heronswood and Windcliff. Heronswood became the “go to” nursery and garden outside Seattle for finding the most interesting and rare plant material. Hinkley writes of the selling of Heronswood and his later return to manage the nursery, but the book is mainly about the building of Windcliff. Hinkley writes about the people and plants and gardens in his life, with engaging literary skill, plant knowledge and humour. One chapter begins with *“Note to self: It is still a lot of work”*.



This is the first book I have ever read to actually put true words to “why garden? Hinkley “gets” it- and articulates it brilliantly- big purchases, big successes, and big mistakes: designs gone awry, plant choices that became invasives, vet bills from choosing a bad ornamental grass. And there are plants I don't even know of the genus, and certainly won't find at Canadian Tire, but it inspires me to observe, think long term, and be bold and adventurous in this gardening life.

And one day this spring, while puttering through Outback Nursery, I found two *Olearia x oleofolia* ‘Waikariensis’.....Hinkley mentioned it as a “must have”...well...sorry...I bought both...gardeners are only generous once they propagate more.....next year's plant sale!

Here's to a wonderful summer read!

Note: Laughing Oyster Bookstore brought it in special order, but very quick to arrive.

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Top: 'Ilam Violet', Bottom: 3' Tall Purple Iris - *Iris laevigata*
Photos by Garth Wedemire.

