



www.nirsrhodos.ca

# NORTH ISLAND RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

THE JUNE EDITION

# THE RHODOTELLER

PO Box 3183, Courtenay BC V9N 5N4

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## JUNE 2020

## Coming Events

### June 4<sup>th</sup> — Executive Meeting

This month's meeting will be held at the home of **Dave & Noni Godfrey, 4686 Montrose Drive, Courtenay.** This meeting will be held outside. To keep us all safe, we ask that everyone bring their own chair, beverage, and snack. Chairs can be placed 2m apart. Please email me ASAP so we can see how many of you feel comfortable with meeting up. We need to discuss finances and the elections. The meeting will begin at **10 a.m.**



*Dan & Margaret Ryan's Rhodo wants to be seen!*

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## PRESIDENT'S NOTES, *Maureen Denny*

As I sit here and write this, my last President's Notes, I never dreamed that my term as President would end in such a strange way. The cancellation of all our club's main fundraising events of the year, executive meetings, and the regular meetings, and postponing the AGM. All this was so unexpected.

A big thanks to Nadine who has continued to produce the monthly Newsletter, and all who have contributed to the newsletter. Thanks too to Dave and Garth for maintaining the club's very good website. We can keep in touch with the NIRS this way even if we can't meet in person at this time.

Another way we are keeping in touch has been "The Living Gallery," a collage of Rhodo truss pictures sent in by members. This idea of a gallery was Noni's idea and is a way to see other's rhodos since the cancellation of The Mother's Day Garden Tour. Seeing all these beautiful trusses, then noting the name of the photographer I felt I was having an imaginary visit in that person's garden! Thanks to Noni and Garth who spent many hours preparing this "Gallery."

During this time of Covid 19, I have been thinking about all the public gardens that are being lovingly maintained but have no paying visitors to support them. The financial loss to these gardens must be huge. On our island, Milner Gardens comes to my mind. This garden is certainly special to all ARS Chapters on Vancouver Island, as it now houses a collection of about 230 species Rhododendrons in the new Greig Species Rhododendron Garden. I have been thinking maybe now is a good time to buy a membership or even make a small donation to Milner Gardens, a way to show support during these difficult times.

Normally my term as President would be over at the end of June, and our AGM with elections, would have happened at the beginning of May. There are three positions up for renewal, all for two-year terms. President, Vice President, and a Director position, which will be also tied to membership chair. We hope to hold the AGM and elections sometime this summer. Until then all current executive members and directors will continue to hold their positions. Please contact me if you wish to volunteer. The executive needs the enthusiasm of new people!

*CON'T*

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In closing off my Notes for the end of my term as President I would like to sincerely thank everyone, all executive members and everyone in the club for a great two years as NIRS President. I hope all will be well in September for the club to meet again at the church hall, but as these strange times continue, we just have to wait and see what happens.

The picture of me standing on the ladder was taken in front of a huge Rhodo about fifty years old, which is growing on the property line in our back yard. Every spring it puts on this glorious display. What a treat!

Maureen





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## NIRS LIVING GALLERY – A GREAT LOCAL RESOURCE

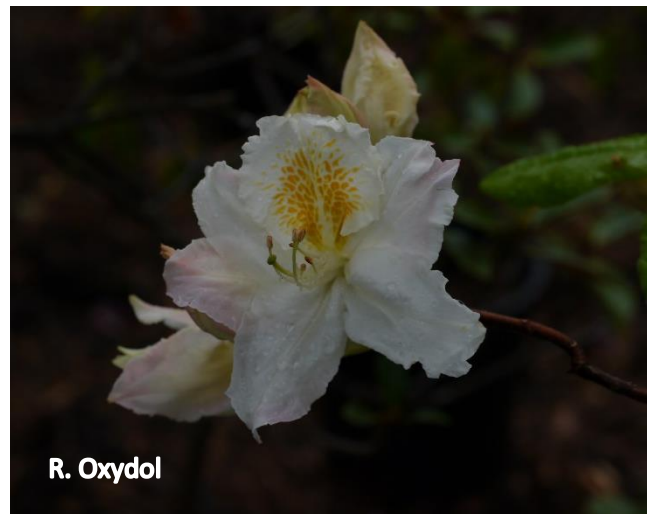
*Diana Scott*

Well, I'm excited. When 'A Virtual Mother's Day Show and Tour' was conceived and initiated, our members took up the challenge with enthusiasm. What a great 'show' of rhodos, azaleas, companion plants, and beautiful gardens! An unexpected but amazing side benefit is that we now have a record of named plants in particular locations that are blooming in a specific time period. What a fabulous resource!

At the time the Mother's Day gallery went up on our NIRS website, my neighbours had been noticing the different rhododendrons that could be grown. They were asking lots of questions as they considered adding more interesting rhodos to their gardens. I directed them to our website and they were delighted by the beautiful photos and the variety of NAMED plants that are growing right here in our beautiful North Island area. They are now 'on the hunt' for some new favourites.

The Mother's Day Gallery was such a success that it spurred on the current project documenting what's blooming in 3 time periods: Early May, Late May, and June forward. The focus is on rhododendrons and azaleas, and the Galleries are booming (blooming??)! I encourage you to get out your camera/ipad/iphone and add to the current living gallery.

*Con't*



Along with our named varieties, we have the challenge of the ‘Unks’ or unknown (to the owner/photographer) rhodos. I have a small garden with quite a number of rhodos. I seem to be developing a collection of Unks – some purchased knowing that they were an Unk; others that were labeled as one thing and have grown in to something quite different. These have been purchased from well respected nurseries, and from our own stock. Mislabeling - it happens. Many gardeners are not interested in the name of the plant and are happy to just enjoy the show. Some of us are VERY interested in knowing the name of the plant. By looking through our galleries, I may find that

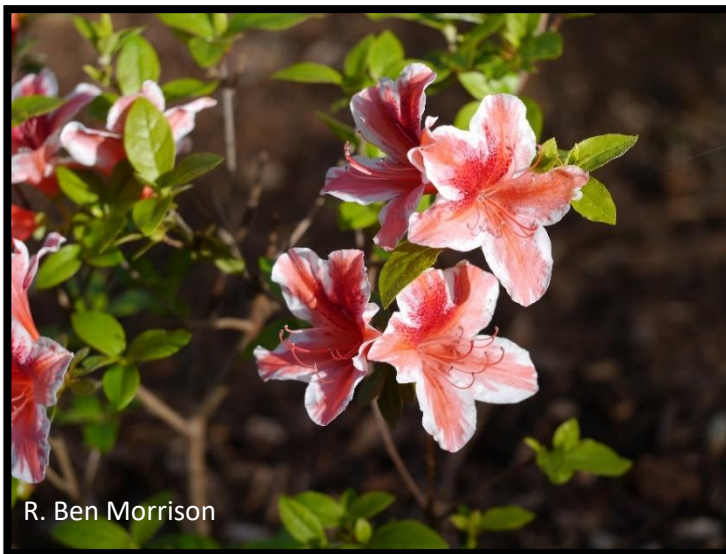
Unk in your garden and learn the name. If not, then you, dear fellow rhodoholics, are just the resource to ferret out the identities of these currently unknown name-seeking rhodos! Webmaster Dave has written instructions on how to contact him if you have a ‘wondering/guess/thought’ about one of these Unks. It is difficult to be sure by looking at a photo – but you may be able to shed some light on what it might be. Be brave – shout it out!

This is a great project. It is already a wonderful resource showing our local rhodos at various stages from bud through bloom, to new growth. As the gallery grows, it will be invaluable to our members as well as a way to connect with our larger community. One of the major tenants of our organization is: ‘The American Rhododendron Society is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to encourage interest in and to disseminate information about the genus *Rhododendron*.’ This project fits in perfectly! Bravo to all who have, are, and will be participating.

A big THANK YOU goes to the folks behind the scenes who are making the information accessible to us all. Dave Godfrey and Garth Wedemire, with consultant Noni Godfrey have spent countless hours putting together the Galleries, sizing, and labeling photographs, and doing all the technical wizardry that is required to ‘make this happen’. Kudos, congratulations, and THANK YOU!



*R. concatenens* Larsons form



*R. Ben Morrison*

Photos by Sue Klapwijk

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# TRILLIUMS

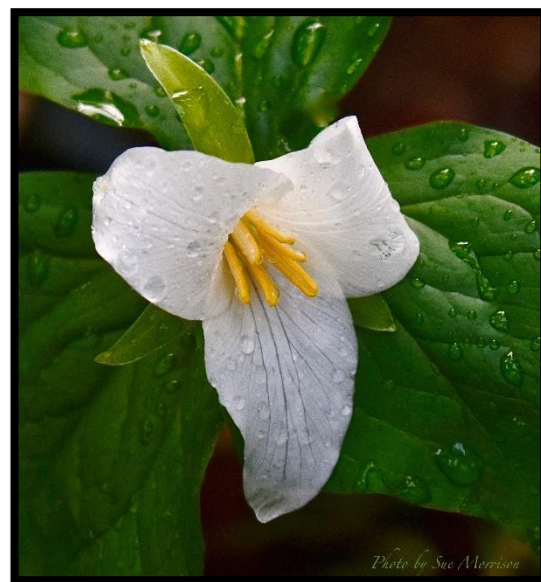
*By Jill Gould*

It seems they are everyone's favourite flowers—oh, next to Rhododendrons, of course. The Western Trillium (*Trillium ovatum*) is protected by provincial law. It is illegal to pick or dig them up. (Of course, if it's your own property, that's different.) A picked flower can stunt the plant and a picked stem may kill it. We are fortunate in that our woodland is home to a fair number, popping up here and there, often to our surprise.

Trilliums are members of the Lily family. As the name suggests, each trillium rhizome puts up a single stem, with three leaves, three sepals and three petals. The flower emerges white, and as it ages, gradually turns pink or mauve. The seed pod takes some time to mature. The seeds are coated in a substance which is attractive to ants, which carry the seeds to their nests. This may account for the scattered distribution of trilliums in an area: one here, one there, rather than in clumps; clumps may form if the plant is undisturbed for a few years. A happy trillium will produce a mat of rhizomes, so you may sometimes see two or three stems emerge together.

Trilliums are not difficult to transplant, but they do tend to be quite deep in the ground. Be prepared to dig down to six inches. Art Lightburn of M.A.R.S. successfully grows trilliums from seed, and occasionally donates them to our plant sales. It takes a few years for a seed trillium to get to flowering size.

Last winter, we had a neighbour with a small excavator prepare an access trail to the rear of our acreage, for woodlot management. This spring, we had to “rescue” several trilliums that emerged from their winter slumber, as they would have been damaged by the traffic. I assure you that everyone has survived and is now doing well in the flower garden. This exercise was not without hazard, however. Having marked with a stick where a trillium was, I returned with a bucket, a shovel, two dogs and Dave. When we got to the stick, we could not find the trillium. Once we moved Dave's left foot, there it was! The soft ground protected it from damage, and it survived the move to the garden.



Trillium ovatum, Jill Gould photo



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## CVRG

*Maureen Denny*

Something about the weather has encouraged Rhododendrons and many other flowering plants to have especially beautiful flowers this spring. The Comox Valley Rhododendron Garden has put on a fantastic display. Or so it seems in my observations.

About three weeks ago Antje Guertler and I met at the gardens and spent some time weeding and cleaning up, while practising social distancing. An easy thing to do in this large outdoor space. The gardens are now in need of more attention, weeding, deadheading and general clean up. There will be a Work Party on the evening of June 11 at 7pm. If you plan on coming let us all remember to stay 6ft. apart.

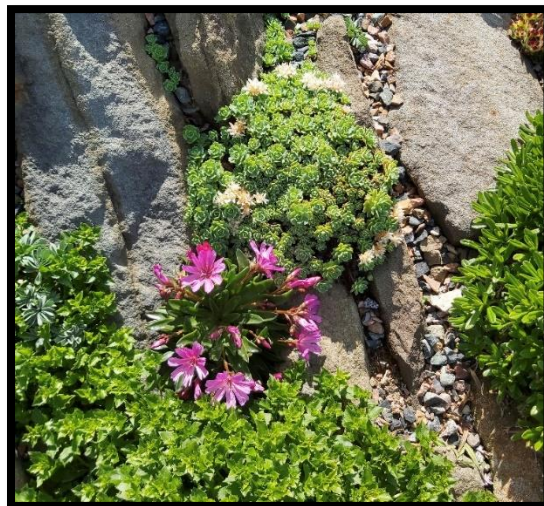
Please bring your tools and a bucket. For the safety of all we will not gather afterwards for coffee and goodies.

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## CREVICE GARDEN

*Judi Murakami*

We're so fortunate to have such talented gardeners in our midst, some of whom get paid to showcase their talents. Dany Fortin, one of our members, was even awarded a "bouquet" in the Comox Valley Record with the following: *"The CREVICE GARDEN at the marina in Comox is extraordinary right now, a sight to behold! Kudos to a man named Danny for creating it and to whoever maintains it. The Record should put a picture on their front page. Thanks too to the Comox works department making and keeping our town so beautiful."*



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## THE CLYDE GARDEN

### *A TRANSFORMATION FROM UNAPPRECIATED HOME AND GROUNDS TO A SEASIDE PARADISE.*

Jim and Lois moved to Miracle Beach in Black Creek in May of 1988. It was a blank landscape, heavily treed & virtually no gardens except for what looked like a possible vegetable garden ocean side. Jim did put tomatoes in there the first year, but Lois doesn't remember how well they fared as they were too busy getting established in a home that had been a summer home, then a rental for many years. Lois still remembers the clerk at the local hardware store asking if all their light bulbs had burnt out at once as they had quite a collection on the counter.



Gardening in earnest started the next year in 1989. They were both working full time, so hired a landscape company to clear the ocean side area, make some gardens, and lay sod, so the fun began. Plant buying!!, and friends and neighbours donated whatever plants they could. Some Lois wished she had never planted, "you know "Lois said, "The dreaded Lilly of the Valley, but oh the fragrance is so heavenly in the Spring!"

A friend gave them their first Rhododendron 'America' in 1988. The next ones came from Farquharson's in 1989, Grace Seabrook, Lady Clem Mitford & Trilby. Lois made some gardens on the roadside of the house to get them established. Then she was hooked!

In the fall of 1990, the top 30 feet of a Douglas fir came down in a storm spearing into the ground and taking out a neighbour's fence. They then had to inspect the rest of the trees. Spring of 1991 they had 10 trees taken down, 7 fir & 3 birch. The grounds looked like a logging camp for a few months. They now had firewood for many years to come.



*Con't*





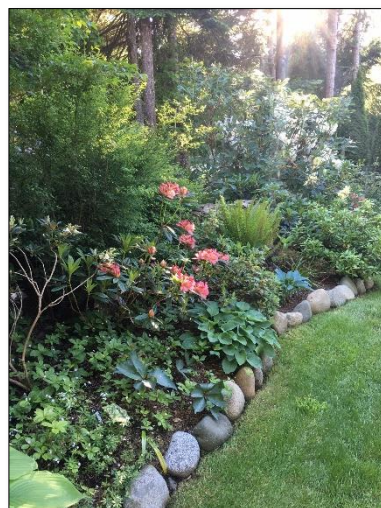
In 1992 the garage was built, along with the task of making more gardens. There was lots of clearing of snowberry, thimbleberry & blackberry. Lois made most of the garden beds when she was on holidays. They hired a local boy, Matthew Coley to help. Jim would help when he was not working. As many of us do, the beds were always made too small, then made bigger to be able to add more plants! Jim remembers this part vividly!!

They did a house renovation in 2001, which prompted the removal of a rose garden, which in turn, had Jim and Lois making more gardens to accommodate the roses and many more plants, of course.

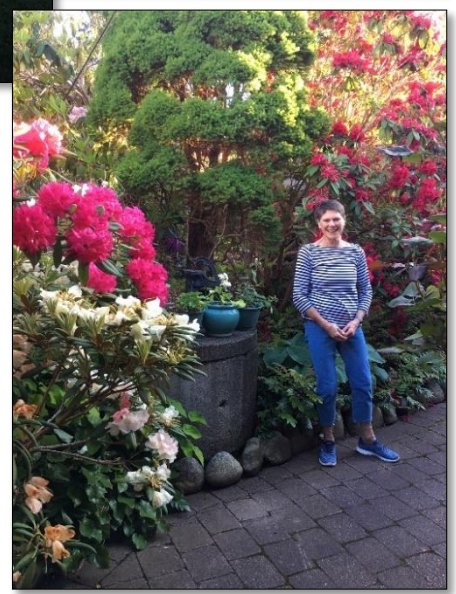
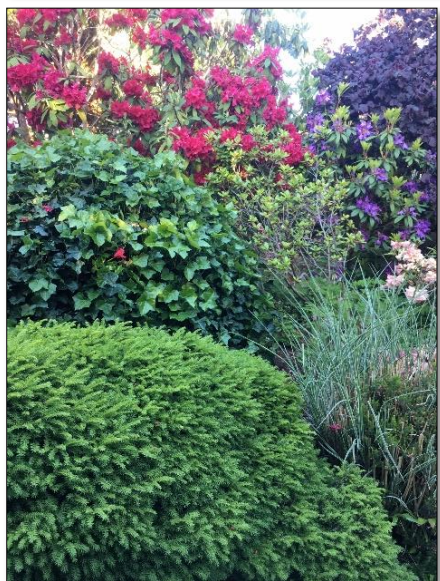
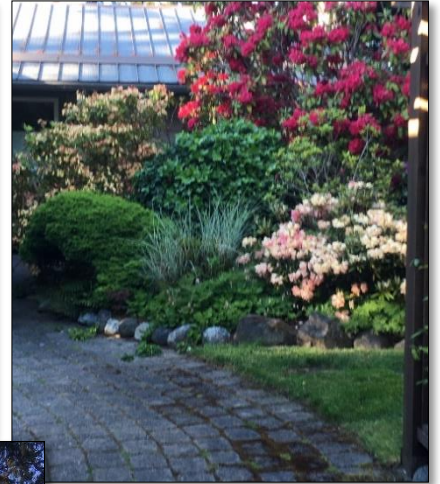
The last gardens were made in 2012-2013 after Hydro decided to remove more trees from around their hydro lines in 2011. Two maples and a couple of firs were downed...more firewood. This let in a lot more light so more moving of plants and more buying of plants.

As Lois explained "The rest is history, many rhodos and companion plants, lots of plant deaths and more plant moving than you can imagine & still moving them. I readily admit that I am a Rhodoholic and plantaholic and I am proud of it! there definitely could be a worse trait! Gardening is definitely a labour of love & I am truly committed!"

Lois and Jim joined the NIRS in 1993 she believes or maybe 1992, too long ago to remember she says. Lois and Jim have been volunteers throughout the years at meetings, our plant sales, Lois has been active on the executive committee, they have opened their garden for our Mother's Day tours and hosted many visitors. Great gardeners, Great members!









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## ON THE WEB... by Dave Godfrey, NIRS Webmaster

With the success of our recent “Mother’s Day Truss Show & Tour” gallery, Garth and I have decided to continue receiving photographs from members to create an ongoing ‘Living Gallery’. You can find a link to these galleries on our Home page. It is called “*Living Gallery of What’s in Bloom*”.

When this link opens to the new page, you will see that there are currently two gallery options. The ‘Early May’ gallery contains photos taken and submitted in the first two weeks of May; many were featured in our Mother’s Day Show and Tour. In the second gallery (‘Late May’) are the current photos submitted by our members since mid-May. We will create a third gallery for any photos taken and submitted during the month of June or later.

As it explains on the page, because the ‘Late May’ gallery of NIRS What’s Blooming (May 16 to May 31st) is a “Living Gallery”, it is updated frequently with new photos added as they become available. Since the content of the ‘Late May’ gallery changes almost daily, the most recent photos submitted are placed at the beginning of the gallery. You will see a list of contributors and the dates submitted as a reference. You will not need to look through the entire gallery to find the latest photos. (see opening page below)

Click on any gallery below. Remember to close the new gallery tab to return directly to this page



What’s Blooming  
- Early May



What’s Blooming  
- Late May

## Current Gallery: What’s Blooming - Late May

### Most Recent Submissions to the Gallery

May 28, 2020 – 8 by Diana Scott  
May 28, 2020 – 8 by Jean Looy  
May 28, 2020 – 15 photos by Garth Wedemire  
May 27, 2020 – 2 photos by Doug Kitts  
May 25, 2020 – 14 photo by Jean Looy  
May 25, 2020 – 4 photos by Garth Wedemire  
May 24, 2020 – 1 photo by Doug Kitts  
May 23, 2020 – 7 photos by Antje Guertler  
May 23, 2020 – 8 photos by Barb Staton  
May 23, 2020 – 7 photos by Connie Prain

When you open one of these galleries, there may be a short delay before the gallery appears on your screen. Each page of the gallery may contain up to twenty large photographs which will take time to load. At time of writing (May 28<sup>th</sup>) there are nearly 300 photos on 14 pages and growing! It should be noted that, once the slide show begins (play arrow in upper right of screen), it will play through all the photos on all

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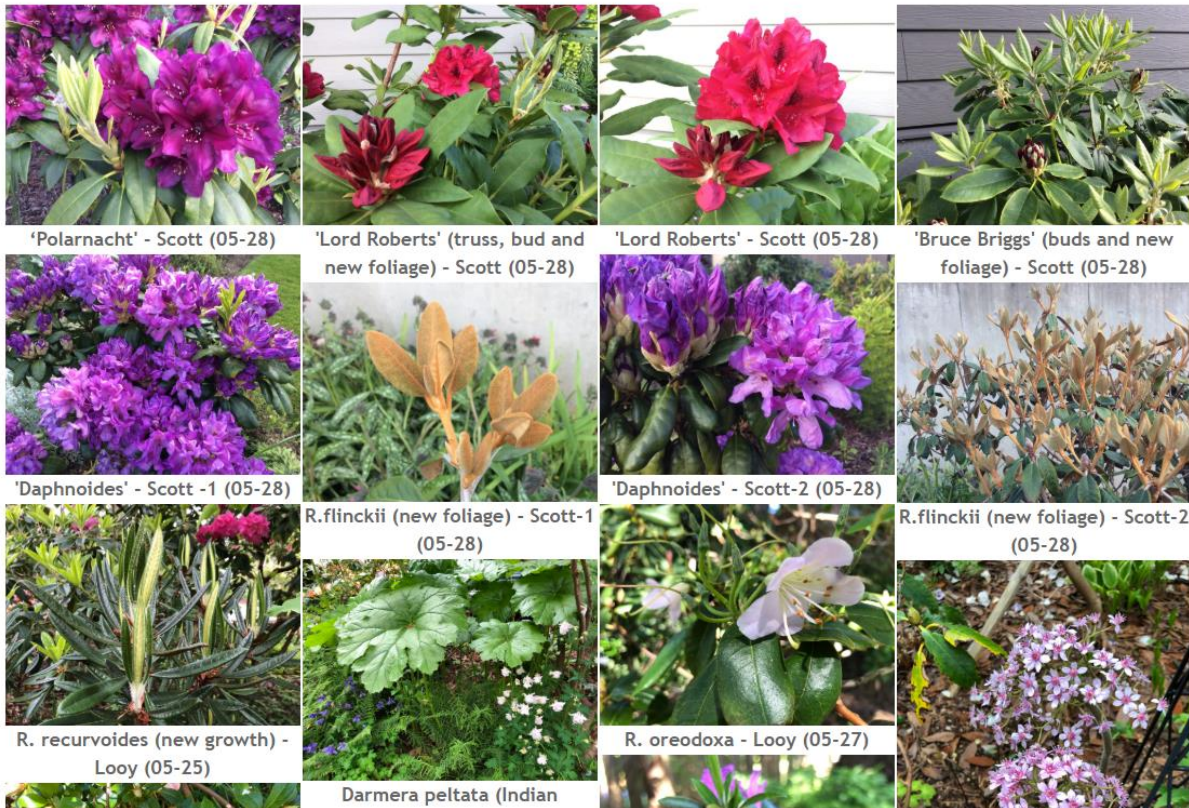
pages continuously. The name of the plant and its owner should appear in the upper left. Here is an image of the latest 'Late May' gallery page where you will begin:

## NIRS – What's Blooming – Late May

### Photos from May 16 to May 31, 2020

Click on any picture to view larger gallery images. Close this tab to exit the What's Blooming Gallery.

1 2 3 ... 14 Next »



Occasionally, photos are submitted as 'Unknown' or 'Unk' – indicating that the name of the plant is unknown to the photographer. If, while you are viewing the gallery, you recognize one of these "Unknowns", please email me with the correct name. Include any relevant information that you may have. Alternately, you may use the "email webmaster" link located on our website – choose menu item "Contact Us" followed by "email our Webmaster."

Please continue to email your photographs with the name of the rhodo or plant (garden shots and companion plants are also welcome) to me ([davegod@shaw.ca](mailto:davegod@shaw.ca)) and we will share with all.

Until we can once again get together as members and friends, stay safe and healthy, and please share your beautiful garden photos for all of us to enjoy!



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## BERNIE & GLORIA GUYADER'S GARDEN

When I spoke to Bernie a couple of weeks ago, he was thrilled that this spring his garden was so lush, and his Rhododendrons were covered in blossoms. It definitely made being in isolation easier to take. Thanks for the picture tour of the garden Bernie! Your garden is an inspiration!





