



NORTH ISLAND RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

THE OCTOBER EDITION

THE RHODOTELLER

www.nirsrhodos.ca

PO Box 3183, Courtenay BC V9N 5N4

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OCTOBER 2020

**06 October – Executive Meeting
Comox United Church @ 10 AM**

(Covid Safety Plan will be followed)

Unfortunately, general meetings continue to be cancelled due to the pandemic. But it is hopeful that we may be able to provide an online 'Zoom' meeting in October. Plans are in the works to share a meeting with MARS and other Island chapters in November featuring a presentation by Steve Hootman.

In the meantime, check out the 'What's Blooming' in our gardens, a seasonal update of plants blooming during the month. The photos are sent in by members and posted to the 'Living Gallery'. Check it out!





PRESIDENT'S VIEW ... *by Dave Godfrey*

Well, it seems someone threw a switch and overnight we went from warm summer weather to cooler fall-like weather. Of course, it did not help that we had to endure a week of smoky skies because of the wildfires burning in Washington, Oregon and northern California. We only pray that the fires have not personally impacted too many of our friends in their respective Rhododendron chapters south of the border.

Our gardens continue to keep us busy, as we must now 'put to bed' the many plants in preparation for the coming winter. Soon some trees will begin to live up to the season and the leaves will begin to 'fall'. Raking and collecting all these leaves becomes an annual tradition for many of us. There is some controversy among rhodophiles as to whether to rake up the leaves under our favourite plants or leave them as mulch. Some claim that the dropped leaves can shelter insects and pathogens harmful to the plants; while others prefer to have them protect the roots from cold. It really is a matter of personal choice.

To demonstrate the capabilities of Zoom technology, several members of our NIRS Propagation group held a meeting which seemed to work well. Even those without a camera or microphone can participate. This is described in more detail in a report by Diana Scott found in the issue.

Our sister chapter (MARS) in Parksville/Qualicum is arranging for a Zoom presentation by Steve Hootman. Other chapter members will be invited to join in on the presentation tentatively scheduled for mid-November. Details will be announced next month.

Some members have already sent in their membership renewals online or through Canada Post and we thank you for doing so. As mentioned previously, it is vital to our organization that we continue to pay our annual dues to the ARS to ensure the survival of our society. As one member put it: "To receive 4 ARS Journals and 10 newsletters each year for less than \$1 a week is a bargain!"

Due to family health reasons, Nadine Boudreau unfortunately had to resign as editor of our newsletter. I agreed to throw together this October issue. But I am pleased to announce that **Kathy Haigh** has agreed to take over the editor's position for future issues. Thank you, Kathy, and welcome to the team!

*That's it for this month, but remember as
Dr. Henry says: Be kind, be calm and be safe!*



Bronze Medal to Ruth Fowler

September 2020

It was with great pleasure that President Dave Godfrey presented the American Rhododendron Society Bronze Medal to Ruth Fowler in September 2020. The ARS Bronze Medal is awarded for outstanding contributions to a chapter and is the highest commendation awarded by a local chapter in the society.

Ruth joined the NIRS in May 2009 and has been a regular participant at our meetings and events. Early on, Ruth offered to assist with the library, and she continues to welcome folks, helping them make their book and magazine selections. Although somewhat quiet in nature, Ruth has always stepped forward to help out as a committee member or volunteer. Organized and capable, she is an ongoing supporter, volunteering at the Rhodo Sale and has co-chaired our annual Garden Tour. Ruth has worked at the Comox Valley Rhododendron Garden and is part of the Propagation Group, contributing actively in meetings and work parties. In addition to her many roles within the club, Ruth served as a Director on the Executive from 2014 to 2018.

As a valued member of our club, we thank Ruth for her many contributions and congratulate her on being awarded the ARS Bronze Medal by the North Island Rhododendron Society.

The Bronze Medal was presented as part of a framed certificate stating:

"The American Rhododendron Society - North Island Chapter
recognizes Ruth Fowler for the Bronze Medal Award
for her many years of service and continued dedication to the Society"



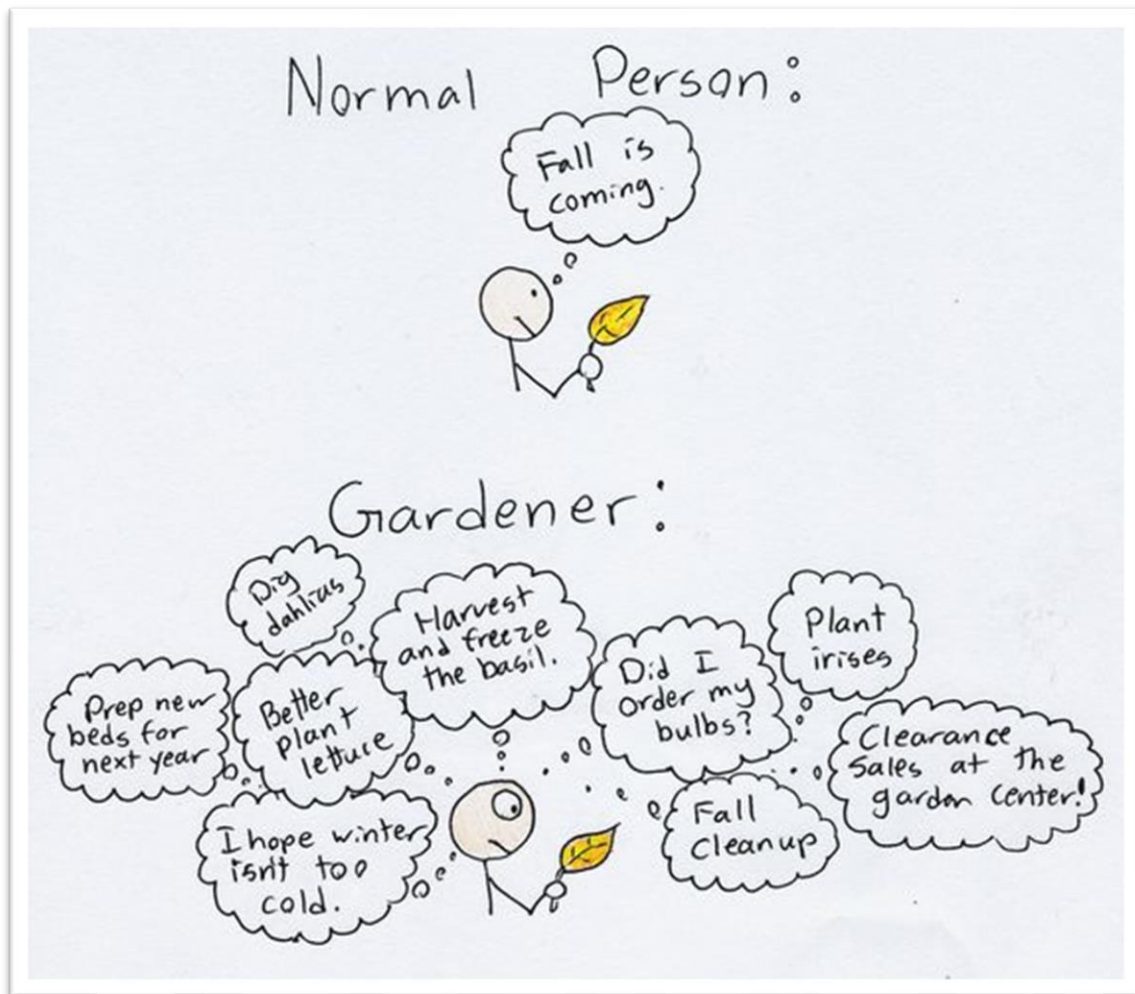
MEMBERSHIP REPORT ...by Dan and Margaret Ryan

Our membership renewals for 2021 are well underway. To the end of September, we have already received 14 e-transfers and 14 cheques by mail. We thank those members who have kindly renewed and encourage others to do so, sooner rather than later.

Remember we are offering the "Early Renewal Program." Register before November 30, 2020 and you will be entered into a draw to win your membership fee back as an incentive. We would like to have memberships renewed ASAP, so we can have everyone signed up with the ARS by January 1, 2021 to ensure you receive your Winter edition of the Journal.

We encourage members to mail a cheque payable to N.I.R.S. to our chapter mailing address - found in your little booklet and on the front page of each newsletter. Or if you prefer, e-transfer your renewal by email to the club Treasurer Noni Godfrey (nonigod@shaw.ca).

Thank you from Dan & Margaret.



C.V.R.G. REPORT ...by Maureen Denny

The September 10th work party was well attended with about fifteen members attending. The weeding, raking and general clean up was all done in about an hour or so and then we gathered at the picnic table for coffee and treats. Thank you to all who volunteered!

In September's newsletter I reported that vandalism had occurred on two occasions to some Rhodos and signage in the gardens. I submitted an article to The Record concerning these unfortunate events, and after a lag of one week the article was printed in the September 23rd edition.

The next work party will be held on October 15th at 10am, weather permitting. There will probably be lots of leaves to rake. A few wheelbarrows are always appreciated. Considering the increase in the spread of Covid, I think it is wise we do not gather for coffee and treats afterwards.

Hope to see some of you there, Maureen.

FALL

Twisting turning falling leaves
Dancing down from mighty trees.
Red and brown, orange and gold
They make a story bound to be told.

See the squirrel's pouches swell
Gathering nuts for Winter's spell.
The bears are fat and sleepy too
They plan to sleep the Winter through.

The whole wide world is at its best
All the animals prepare for rest.
Summer's gone and here is Fall
The prettiest season of them all.

Yvonne Dionne
Age 11



**HAPPY THANKSGIVING
TO ALL OUR NIRS
MEMBERS!**

PROPAGATION GROUP REPORT ... *by Diana Scott*

A Propagation meeting was held via 'Zoom' on September 22nd, hosted by Garth Wedemire, and led by President Dave. This was somewhat of a 'try-out' meeting to see if and how using Zoom might work over the coming months.

We were a very small group with a number of us new to the Zoom experience. Participants used computers or tablets and one member who did not have a computer with a camera was able to see the rest of us and participate over a phone connection. Garth noted issues as we went along with a view to helping others who would like to try this platform on another occasion. Thanks to Garth for hosting and looking for ways to make this work for our club.

We have a number of plants, primarily azaleas, that need to be potted up from 1 to 2 gallons. Antje has arranged for Carolyn and Maureen to assist with this task and they feel confident that they can do it with appropriate distancing and safety. There is enough soil material and hopefully enough pots to complete the job. Wolfgang and Antje have been taking care of the plants throughout the past many months and advise that they are doing well. Thanks once again to Wolfgang and Antje!

Wolfgang has agreed to do a propagation workshop for Tyler Johns and his City of Courtenay crew on Saturday, October 3rd. "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 fits in beautifully - thanks Wolfgang! It is likely that Antje and her crew will do the potting up on the same date.

At the District Meeting there was discussion of the propagation work being done by other Chapters. Their members expressed an interest in taking cuttings from our area this fall. Due to Covid-19 and restricted access to the facilities that are housing their plants, a date later this fall will be arranged. Once the date is chosen, we will host one or two members from each group, and organize the activity following appropriate Covid-19 procedures. Dave will notify the other Chapters and make the arrangements.

This 'trial run' with Zoom had a few technical (and user) glitches but is promising. We may continue to meet via Zoom to discuss issues related to the Propagation Group, but also perhaps to provide information and discussion about other Rhodo/gardening related topics. The Horticultural Society recently hosted a guest speaker via Zoom which went well. Perhaps this type of presentation for members is in our future. Stay tuned!

SHOW AND TELL

One of our favourite meeting segments is the 'Show and Tell'. Since meetings are suspended, we thought members would enjoy a picture or two sent in by members with maybe a comment about the subject. Please join in and share something special.

Bernie's gentians.



Willow gentians



Yak gentians

Bernie Guyader writes...

"When people think gentian, if they do, they usually think of the trumpet gentian in the spring. There are some that blossom throughout the summer. The willow gentian come in several colours, including white, and blossoms through August and September, as well as the yak gentian.

The fall crocuses have suddenly appeared, and the slugs weren't far behind. There should be enough blossoms for all. The next gentian to blossom will be the Asian gentian. If you like blue flowers you may find some plants at garden club plant sales."



Bernie's fall crocus

SHOW AND TELL CONTINUED...

Paul and Lynn Wurz' Garden.

On September 11th, Barb & Brian Staton visited 'Hidden Acres Garden' in Campbell River. Below are photos which Barb shared for the rest of us to enjoy...



Lynn and her beautiful dahlias

Paul working on
his new pond!

