



NORTH ISLAND RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

THE SEPTEMBER EDITION

# THE RHODOTELLER

[www.nirsrhodos.ca](http://www.nirsrhodos.ca)

PO Box 3183, Courtenay BC V9N 5N4

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## SEPTEMBER 2020

### NO MEETINGS SCHEDULED

Unfortunately, meetings continue to be cancelled due to the pandemic, but fortunately we have a great website to keep us connected. Garth Wedemire and Dave Godfrey are updating the website regularly. Check out the 'What's Blooming' in our garden, a month to month update of plants blooming during the month. The photos are sent in by members. The MARS chapter also has a gallery of What's Blooming. Both can be accessed though our website [www.nirsrhodos.ca](http://www.nirsrhodos.ca)



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

Never in my wildest dreams did I imagine the circumstances I would face in becoming our chapter's President. I wish to thank all those who have confidence in my ability to provide leadership during these unusual times.

Because of the pandemic, we have not been able to meet in person since our March general meeting. However, in consultation with and the approval of the BC government, we were able to conduct our Annual General Meeting (AGM) by means of email communication. Thanks to Robert Argall and Dan Ryan for answering the call for nominations and agreeing to serve as vice-president and director (membership) respectively. As there were no other nominations received, all individuals were acclaimed to the positions for the 2020-21 term and the report filed with the BC Registrar of Societies.

Following social distancing guidelines, the executive was able to meet in our garden on June 2<sup>nd</sup>. The possibility of future general meetings at the hall remains unlikely until such time as a vaccine is available. Also, future executive meetings normally held in the home of one of our members will not be possible. As a result of not holding our monthly meetings, the executive realises that this will cause a financial hardship for the Comox United Church. Therefore, it has been decided we will hold our small executive meetings at the church for the foreseeable future.

Most of us are blessed with having our gardens to keep us busy. We enjoy the benefits of nature and today more than ever, we need these benefits of sound mind, body, and spirit. It seems many have taken to growing vegetables for the first time, as seed and starter packets were difficult to find in the early season. When we needed to replace our freezer in April, we had to wait 10 weeks for delivery due to a run on them because of the pandemic. It seems toilet paper wasn't the only thing in short supply!

Oblivious to what is happening around the world, our gardens (and weeds) keep growing. As Maureen will report, we continued our normal evening work parties at the CVRG throughout the summer months. Cleanup and weed control are always an ongoing need at the garden. Thanks to all those members who came out to lend a hand in this safe outdoor activity.

It seems some of our members are willing to attend a virtual meeting online using modern technology. We will discuss this further with other chapters to decide when and how to accomplish this. As we are already approaching September, we will also need to start accepting membership renewals online and through the Canada Post snail mail.

We will rely on our newsletters and emails to keep us informed. So please bear with us as we navigate these unusual times. And remember as Dr. Henry says: be kind, be calm and be safe!

Cheers – Dave

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## DISTRICT 1 PRESIDENTS' MEETING REPORT:

On behalf of the North Island chapter, on Monday, August 24, 2020, Noni and I attended the District Presidents' meeting hosted by the MARS chapter at Milner Gardens in Qualicum Beach. This was an outside meeting with plenty of social distancing and hand sanitizer available.

District Director Chris Hodgson opened the semi-annual meeting at 11 am with welcome remarks and thanks to the participants attending. All five island chapters, plus Chris from the Vancouver chapter, were all represented. The only noticeable absence was any member from the Fraser South chapter.

Each chapter gave a report on their club's activities over the past year (the scheduled March meeting was cancelled due to the Covid pandemic.) Many chapters are facing the same issues regarding cancelled meetings and activities due to the concerns surrounding the pandemic. Some chapters have held their 'virtual' AGMs and elections, while others will be doing so in the coming weeks.

As with the NIRS, several chapters have held various plant sales to off set the loss of income through the cancellation of spring plant sales and garden tours. Some have indicated that they may hold a 'members only' fall sale.

There was a lengthy discussion about regular memberships vs local memberships. It seems that some chapters still allow 'local' members, and this continues to be an issue for the ARS. As ARS President Ken Webb of the Victoria chapter explained, the ARS does not have the ability to fundraise through sales or tours, and relies heavily on member dues to help finance their ongoing operations, including the cost of publishing and distributing the Journal. This put to rest a rumour that the ARS may consider dropping the dues for 2021. All chapters will be required to submit their dues as per normal.

During the lunch break, many members took the opportunity to tour the newly developed Greig Species Garden and to see the amazing growth that the plants have shown since the planting two years ago.

Following lunch, MARS member Linda Derkach presented Milner Executive Director Geoff Ball with a symbolic cheque for \$5,000 towards the continued development of the Greig Species Garden. This money was donated on behalf of all five island chapters as part of the proceeds of the highly successful fall conference in 2019. MARS President Glen Jamieson thanked all chapters for their support of the conference and contribution to its success.





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With the cancellation of the spring ARS convention in Portland, President Ken Webb took the opportunity to award several ARS medals that were missed at the convention. Nanaimo chapter members Susan and Art Lightburn received the ARS Silver medal for their many years of support and contributions to District 1. While an incredibly surprised Dr. Glen Jamieson was awarded the ARS Gold medal for his many contributions to the organization, including ten years as editor-in-chief of the Journal. Two well deserved awards that were applauded by all in attendance.



Dr. Glen Jamieson (left) receives Gold Medal  
Susan & Art Lightburn (below) receive Silver.



Returning to business at hand, Tony Ansdell of MARS gave a report on the activities of the development of the Greg Species Garden. In addition to the monies donated from the fall conference, the group applied to and received a \$4,000 US grant from the ARS towards the ongoing maintenance and development of the garden. Most of this money was spent to purchase 50 species from the Rhododendrons Species Botanical Garden (RSBG) in Federal Way, WA. Twelve of the smaller more delicate species have been entrusted to the care of the Norm Todd Propagation Centre in Victoria until such time as they are large enough to withstand planting outdoors.

It was also mentioned by John Deniseger that come this fall they will be seeking help from chapter members to help with the spread of mulch on all the garden beds. Since mid-July Marilyn Dawson of MARS has been organizing small work parties on Friday mornings at 9 am to help maintain the appearance of the garden. All are welcome to participate on any Friday morning.

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A discussion then centred on what activities and meetings might be held this fall under the current social distance restrictions. Although Zoom meetings have been successful for other organizations, it was felt that members will begin to miss the social aspects of attending meetings in person. Glen Jamieson and a small group of others will attempt to arrange and organize a presentation from an international speaker to be delivered via Zoom sometime this fall. It was suggested that, not only would our own members like to join this presentation, but other ARS members from many other ARS chapters.

Individual chapters may attempt small social gatherings, but for the next year or more it is unlikely that regular meetings will not be possible for many. To maintain contact and interest with our members, we must rely on email information, interesting newsletters and building our websites. All agreed to work together and keep each other informed of activities and progress in this regard.

On that note, the meeting adjourned at 2:20 pm with thanks to outgoing District Director Chris Hodson for his three years at the helm. Glen Jamieson is now District Director for the next three years. Chris Southwick has agreed to remain as Alternate Director and District Treasurer, with Marilyn Dawson remaining as District Secretary.

It was announced that NIRS will attempt to host the next meeting on Tuesday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021.

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## **MEMBERSHIP** by Dan and Margaret Ryan

It is time to start renewing our memberships for 2021. The executive has agreed the dues for a membership will remain the same - regular \$35.00 and \$10.00 for an associate membership (must hold a regular membership with another ARS chapter.) Our individual dues for the American Rhododendron Society will also remain the same at \$30 US, which we pay out of our memberships.

Once again, 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.

Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, we are not able to have meetings right now. We encourage members to mail a cheque payable to N.I.R.S. to our chapter mailing address - found in your little booklet or on the front page of each newsletter. Or as an alternative, e-transfer your renewal by email to the club Treasurer Noni Godfrey ([nonigod@shaw.ca](mailto:nonigod@shaw.ca))

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## CVRG REPORT *by Maureen Denny*

The Comox Valley Rhododendron Garden has done well this summer, and with the recent substantial rainfall the rhodos are happy! Three evening work parties were held in June, July and August to keep the gardens looking good. To quote Steve Hootman (Director of The Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden in Federal Way, Washington) who was here last November to give the club a consultation regarding the upkeep of the CVRG; "These gardens are a representative of the genus Rhododendron to the public of The Comox Valley." Therefore, we want to make a good impression of our favourite plant to all.

On the evening of the July 14<sup>th</sup> work party, we arrived to find that someone had decided to chop several branches from about six rhodos along the central pathway of the gardens. We were not happy and quite shocked, that a member of the public would do this. Fortunately, sharp loppers were used, and the cuts were not too injurious to the plants. We cleaned up the pruning cuts and the rhodos are okay. We think this act of unsolicited pruning was done to widen the pathway. Of course, we would have preferred that this individual would have contacted the club with their request.



The next work party will be on the MORNING of September 10<sup>th</sup> at 10am. Please bring your own bucket and tools for a general clean up. Thank you to everyone who turned out over the summer. These work parties are fun, and since our general meetings are cancelled, a good way to socialize at a social distance with club members.

Goodies are always appreciated, to go along with the coffee!

Maureen



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## REVENUE TABLE PLANT SALE

At the June executive meeting, President Maureen suggested we try to hold a small plant sale for 'members only', like our Revenue table sales at our meetings. Director Judy Walker agreed to give it a try.



Carolyn and Naomi Chester offered their large driveway as the venue and members were asked to drop off their donated plants. On Saturday, July 4<sup>th</sup> at 10 am, the gate was opened, and members were welcomed.

Tables were well separated along the wide driveway, with plants displayed both on the tables and the adjacent lawn area. Following BC health protocols, the names and phone numbers of the 44 members and guests attending were recorded for possible contact tracing, and hand sanitization was required of everyone upon entrance.



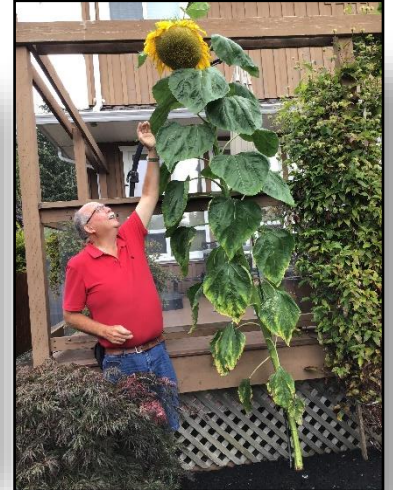
This sale, and the subsequent sale of remaining plants by Naomi through social media, netted the club close to another \$1000. Thanks to all who helped and shopped, and a special thank you to Carolyn and Naomi!

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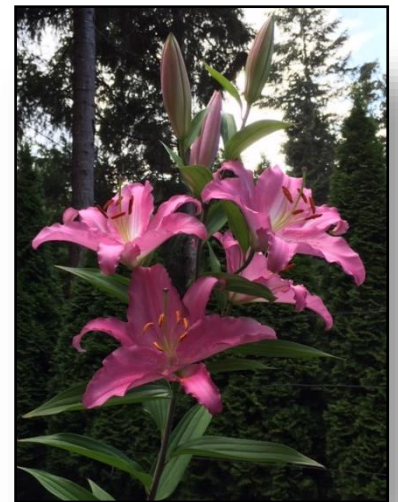
## SHOW AND TELL

One of our favourite meeting segments is the 'Show and Tell'. Since meetings are suspended, I thought members could send in a picture and maybe a comment about a garden related subject.

Please join in, share something special.



Dan and Margaret's happy sunflowers



Lois and Jim Clyde have had a colourful summer garden  
with the begonias, lilies, and fuchsia.



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## SHOW AND TELL CONTINUED



Don and Dorothy Law's perennial Hibiscus



Dave and Noni are enjoying 'Koichiro Wada' a nice compact shrub with dark green foliage. According to all the information found on this rhododendron, it flowers in the spring.

Yet here we are in September and this beauty has just popped open two buds! I would say it is a bit confused.

When I covered the Clyde garden in June, I missed putting in a picture of Jim. Here is Jim doing the final adjustments on their new gate!

