

THE RHODOTELLER



Rhododendron 'rothschildii' buds. Photo by Naomi Chester

Theme: Comox Valley Winter Buds & Bloomers

Meetings & Events

- Feb 4 Qualicum Beach Seedy Saturday www.qbseedysaturday.ca
- Feb 8 Executive Meeting
- Feb 14 General Meeting at Comox United Church at 7:30 pm (treats reminder Sheryl Murakami, Becci Russell, Gwen Wright, Maureen Denny, Ruth Fowler)
- Apr 30 NIRS Rhodo Show & Sale at KFN hall
- May 14 NIRS Mother's Day Garden Tour

Check out the ARS Rhododendron of the Year Awards for North West USA and Canada Region
<https://www.rhododendron.org/roy23nw.htm>

President's View

by Dave Godfrey

Here we are in the middle of winter wondering what Mother Nature might have in store for us this coming year. The past two years have brought us hotter and drier conditions, not only in the summer months but also well into October last year. Then we were hit with a blast of freezing snowy weather right after, that was fun! It remains to be seen how well the plants in our gardens can withstand these extremes. A sign of the times I'm afraid and only the strong will survive!

There are already signs of early spring bulbs appearing around our garden... winter aconites, crocuses, iris reticulata and snowdrops are beginning to poke their heads above ground. Before you know it, we will be back to watering and cutting the lawns once or twice a week!

As winter eventually comes to an end, and it will, we will get back to our normal club activities and routines. Before long, Maureen will be calling for our monthly cleanup work parties at the Comox Valley Rhododendron Garden (CVRG). Not to mention all the work to be done in our own gardens. As we enter gardening season I encourage you, our members, to pot up some plants for the revenue table at our Rhododendron Show and Sale on April 30th.

This year we are looking for additional vendors for the sale. Our propagation rhodos are coming to an end and we could use a few other vendors of garden-related items (bird houses, bee houses, other plants, etc.) If you or anyone you know might be interested, please give Nadine Boudreau a call to discuss.



Mahonia x media 'Charity' photo by Garth Wedemire

Something we look forward to in April is another tour of Robert Argall's garden with his thousands of bulbs in bloom. Robert tells me another 5,000 bulbs were planted this past fall. It

should be another spectacular showing. We'll let everyone know the date of the viewing once it is confirmed.

Carolyn Chester tells me a few of our members have agreed to show their gardens on Mother's Day (May 14th) for our garden tour fundraiser. If you know of any other garden of interest in the North Courtenay/Black Creek areas, please be sure to let Carolyn know. We need at least 6 gardens to make it a success. I can't thank you enough as we rely on our members' support for our major fundraisers, and it is important that we keep the momentum of our club going.

That's all from me for now. I will be unavailable to chair the meeting in February, so I leave you in the trusted hands of Vice President Naomi Chester. Please give her your continued support, as always.



*Amaryllis and
Winter Jasmine just starting to bloom.*

Photos by Valerie Ferris



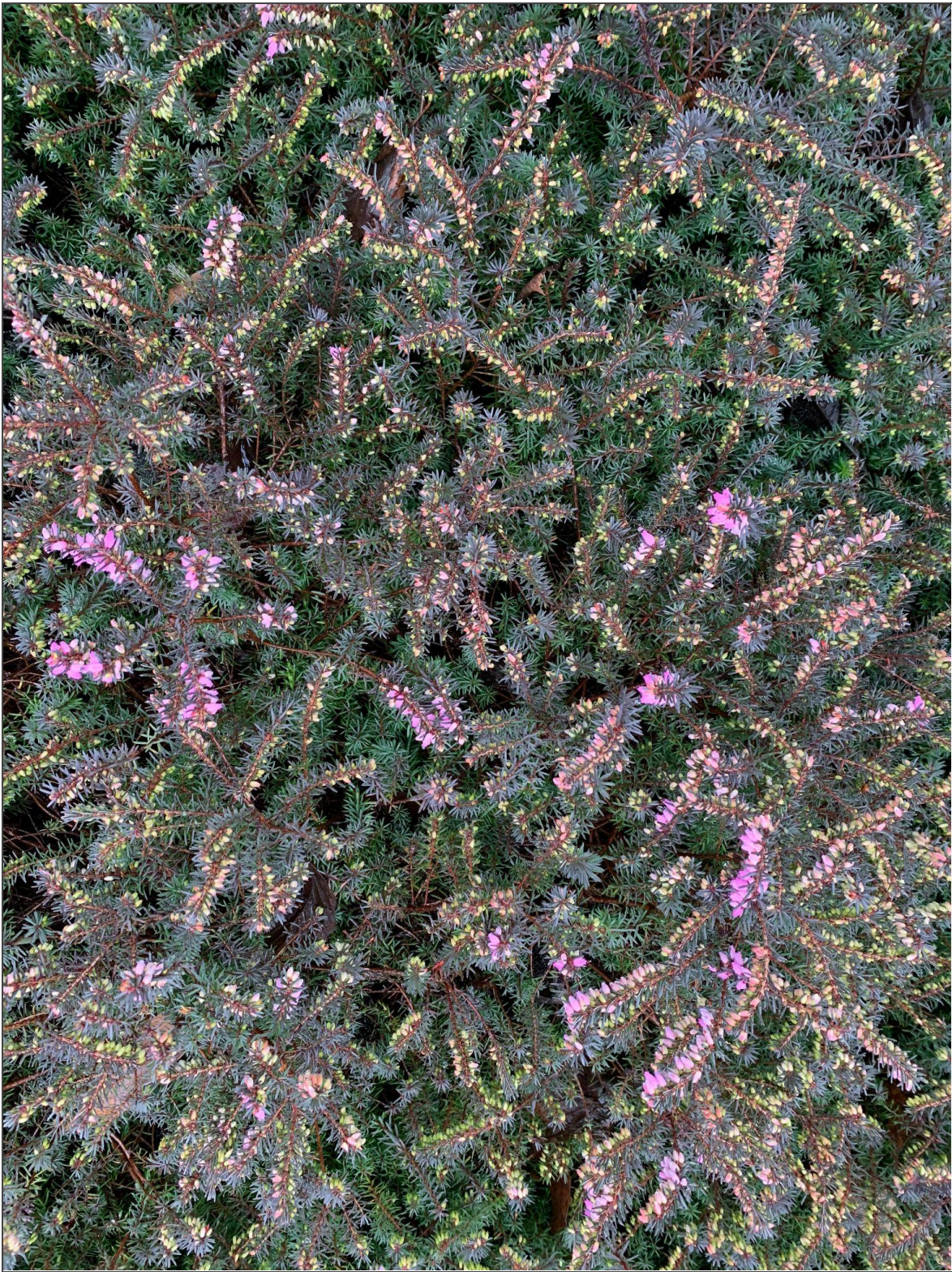
Orange Witchhazel bloom - Hamamelis "Jelena" photo by Naomi Chester

Membership

by Dan Ryan

At our January general meeting we had 44 members and 6 guests signed in. We welcomed two new memberships, David & Jane Bossom of Courtenay, and Thea Whyte, also of Courtenay. As of January 15th, we now have 72 memberships, including 7 associates. Unfortunately, we have 15 of our previous members who have yet to renew. It is never too late to renew, as you can mail a cheque to our postal address or e-transfer your \$40 dues to nonigod@shaw.ca.

The 2023 Yearbooks have been printed and we will begin distribution at our February meeting. For some associate and distant members these will be mailed to you along with your membership cards in the near future.



Heather photo by Julie Waller

Ways & Means: Feb. draw & door prizes by Aubrey Ferris



'Cinnamon Bear'

Flower openly campanulate, 2" across, white with strong purplish-red spotting. Held in dome-shaped trusses of about 20. Bloom Time: Early Midseason Height: 2 feet in 10 years. Cold Hardy to -18°C, (Page 110 in Greer book)



'Makinoi'

Predominant Colour: Pink, White. Blooms Late Midseason. Leaves are recurved, up to 7" long with white tawny indumentum. Usually dense and rounded shrub reaches 3 feet in 10 years. Cold Hardy to -23°C (Page 49 in Greer book)



'Girard's Fuchsia'

Evergreen azalea, masses of large funnel-shaped flowers in vibrant purple, blooms in late spring, Broad and spreading habit, up to 4-6 feet tall and wide. Part shade. Attracts pollinators. Note that it is reported as toxic to dogs, cats and horses.



Hamamelis x intermedia 'Pallida' photo by Garth Wedemire

Program: “Some Scottish Gardens” with Sean Rafferty



Sean Rafferty, a member of the Victoria Rhododendron Society, is a former maintenance gardener and presently a member of numerous garden clubs, including the Nanaimo, Cowichan, Atlantic and Scottish Rhododendron Societies. His club memberships also include the Meconopsis Group, The Alpine Garden Club of BC, and the North American Rock Garden Society.

Sean is the Past President of the Rhododendron Species Foundation and with his wife, Brenda Macdonald, from whom he has gleaned

most of his horticultural knowledge, has made four journeys to the Himalayas.

His talk to the **NIRS on February 14th** will focus on a tour of some Scottish gardens that he and Brenda visited in 2018 and the rhododendron collections contained there.



Hamamelis x intermedia 'Pallida' photo by Sue Grant

Plant of the Month

by Ron Sutton

Rhododendron 'indicum balsaminiflora'

This species azalea is from the mountains of Japan. It has shiny green lanceolate-shaped leaves to 1.5 inches long. The double reddish-orange flowers, 2-2.5 inches wide, bloom in late May. It forms a dense shrub of 3 feet wide by 1.5 feet high in 10 years and is hardy to USDA zone 7 or -18°C. It can handle full sun but isn't drought tolerant.

I have been posting about plants I am currently growing, but this is one I used to have in my Ontario, USDA zone 6, garden. It was purchased from Greer Garden's mail-order business. I had two of these plants, one in the garden and one in a pot. The one in the garden could handle the Ontario winter, but wouldn't flower. Harold Greer figured winter was too cold for it to form flowers. So I ordered another one and kept it potted, and protected in the garage for the winter. It is the one in the photo, and as you can see, it did flower.

This plant is very difficult to find, and I am trying to reacquire one for my Island garden here.



R. 'moupinense'
buds photo by
Garth Wedemire

Rhododendron History: The Church Gardens in Comox

by Noni Godfrey

Back in 2011 our rhododendron club was approached by Margaret Griffith-Cohrane, a representative of the Comox Valley United Church, to see if we would be interested in donating plants for their newly built garden boxes.

Diana Scott, President at that time, set up a committee to investigate this project. The following is a direct quote from our newsletter under the "Member's Notes," by Dave Godfrey:

"On Friday, October 14th (2011), the committee of Harry Wright, Louise Casson and Margaret Griffith-Cochrane were joined by Bernie Guyader, Nadine Boudreau and Dick Bonney to plant the many donated rhododendrons and other shrubs in the newly renovated garden boxes at the Comox United Church.

Some of the rhododendrons were kindly donated by Roberts Smith, while other shrubs were purchased through chapter funds. Thank you, folks, - these gardens will look fantastic for years to come!"

Enjoy travelling through time in pictures, to see how this garden has grown!



Photos taken by Harry Wright on 14 Oct 2011

Planting completed





Five years later in 2016



The gardens in the fall of 2019
And blooming in spring 2020





Helleborus buds photo by Naomi Chester



Helleborus niger photo by Garth Wedemire



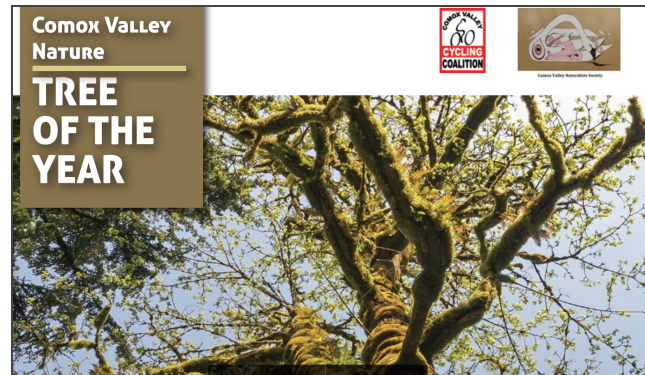
Erica x darleyensis 'White Perfection' photo by Garth Wedemire



Ypsilandra thibetica photo by Garth Wedemire

CVN Tree of the Year 2023 Nominations

Comox Valley Nature 'Tree of the Year' event will be open for tree nominations until March 15, 2023. Do you know of a tree that deserves special recognition? Are you keen to help raise awareness of the benefits of trees and their protection? Nominate a tree and share its story. The Tour and Vote phase will follow from April - June. For more information and the online nomination form see



<https://comoxvalleynaturalist.bc.ca/category/tree-of-the-year/>

Qualicum Beach Seedy Saturday on Feb 4

"Seeding the Future" is the theme of the 19th Annual Qualicum Beach Seedy Saturday event. Featuring a large hall full of seed vendors, plant vendors, and other participants, in addition to other vendors and exhibits outside. QBSS is a very popular, well-attended event and is among the first "seedy saturday" events in the country. Other activities include the ever-popular Seed Swap, door prizes and two 50/50 draws, expert gardening advice from Master Gardeners, and the Seedy Cafe to keep you nourished. There will also be a Town of Qualicum Beach truck on site to collect unwanted pesticides and herbicides.

Admission by donation. For more information, please check out www.qbseedysaturday.ca



Here are some salad greens we have going in our hoop house in January. Arugula, mustard greens, mizuna, bok Choi, romaine and rouge d'hiver. All cold weather hardy varieties. They were started in a propagation box in the garage.

Photos by Beth Hopkins



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North Island Rhododendron Society

<http://www.nirsrhodos.ca>



Beauty Berry - Callicarpa bodinieri (top) and
Acer 'Sangu Kaku' photos by Garth Wedemire