

the Rhodoteller

North Island Rhododendron Society Vol. 40 Number 4 Dec 2025



Mushroom (*Amanita muscaria* group) by D. Godfrey

Meetings and Events

Dec 3 Executive Meeting @ Brian Storey 1886 Mallard Dr., Courtenay
10:00 AM

Dec 9 Christmas Luncheon

Christmas Luncheon



Date: Tuesday December 9th

Time: 12:00 – 2:00 pm

Place: Driftwood Chinese Restaurant, 1130 Cliff Ave, Courtenay

Donation collection: Collection box will be set up at the luncheon. The money will be split between the Food Bank and the Care-A-Van.

What a lovely November we have had; growing up I somehow recollect having 40 days and nights of rain squeezed into the 30 days of November. I don't know what the average temperature or rainfall has been this month, but I have fortunately been able to enjoy many glorious days in the garden and I hope you have too.

Recently I was able to "flag down" an arborist and had them leave a huge pile of their balsam fir boughs chips in our front yard ... our garden is beginning to look quite well put to bed, and definitely smells very seasonal.



Pacific Tree Frog, *Pseudacris regilla*

Please remember that in December we will not have a regular meeting, and instead will be enjoying a daytime Christmas party. At this time, all the tickets have been sold. Many thanks to the NIRS Christmas Party organizing group.

Best wishes to all for a happy Christmas and fun holiday season,

Margaret Griffith-Cochrane



Dahlia by S. Murakami



Scarlet runner bean
by S. Murakami

Items of Interest

Journal of the American Rhododendron Society

Available online - The Fall 2025 issue (v79n4) of the *Journal of the American Rhododendron Society* (JARS) is available for viewing at the OARS website.

https://www.arsoffice.org/digital_jars.asp

Remembering Frank Fujioka



For some of our members, the news of Frank's passing in late October came as a sad shock.

Many here first met Frank Fujioka in April 2008 when members of the NIRS paid a visit to Whidbey Island rhododendron gardens in Washington State. A warm and welcoming gentleman, Frank was famous as a world-renowned rhododendron hybridizer. Some of his famous hybrids include Cherries and Merlot, Seaview Sunset, Elsie Watson, Saffron Silk, Chemainus and Burgundy Lace, to name just a few.

His property on Rhodie Lane in Freeland, Whidbey Island contains hundreds of his hybrids. It was said that the second-best nursery on the island was Frank's discard pile!

He will be missed by the thousands of friends he made through the Rhododendron Society.

"Rest in Peace dear friend, your work here is done!"

Just a few of Frank's famous hybrids...



R. 'Cherries and Merlot'



R. 'Midnight'



R. 'Jim's Blueberry Jam'

Podophyllum peltatum, my Favorite Plant

By Mauren Denny

I grew up just north of Toronto on a rural property where I spent my childhood roaming the fields, streams and forests that surrounded our country home. My parents loved the natural world and passed this interest on to me and my sisters. Every spring and early summer we would visit our special spots in the woods to see if our favorite plants had made it through the winter. There was the orange tiger lily that bloomed along the riverbank, the Jack in the Pulpit growing on a bank under some Hemlock trees, but our real favorite was the clump of Mayapples, or Podophyllums under an old Crabapple tree. I find it interesting that I had a connection as a child with what is now almost my favorite plant in my garden.



Podophyllum peltatum

The Mayapple of Ontario is *Podophyllum peltatum*, not nearly as magnificent, or large as the Chinese species in my garden today, *Podophyllum pleianthum*. This species is native to China, can grow up to 24



inches tall and the odd shaped leaves 24 inches across. To grow them well they like rich damp soil that never dries out and full to partial shade. Every spring I give my plant a topping of homemade compost, and water it thoroughly in dry weather.

The flowers are red and hang below the large leaves, protected by the umbrella like leaves above. To really see the flowers, you have to lift the leaf and peer underneath.

Eventually these flowers form large oblong green seed pods, which when

ripe fall to the ground. The pod then dries to a bluish/grey color that is quite hard to see. I let them lay where they fall to the ground and usually seedlings appear in the spring. Some have even sprouted in the bark chip pathway and the lawn.



Even though I have had this plant in my garden for over ten years I am always amazed by its stages of growth and weird huge shaped leaves.

It is definitely a delight to have in the garden.



Since the summer break, we have 9 new members. Please welcome Dianne Pinder, Dave Meredith, Elaine Richards, Anna Mara Lawries, Barbara Simonson, Debby Rhodes, Rina Vigneault, Laura Gilbert and Dawn Gateman when you see them at our meetings and events. Another sort of new member is Steve Tschach, who has taken over his father's membership since his passing.

As of November 11, we have a total of 87 members, including 7 Associate members, some of whom have not yet renewed for 2026. We also have 4 Honorary Life members: Don & Dorothy Law, Jim & Lois Clyde, Gloria Guyader, and Ann Chevier.

Thank you to those who renewed their memberships early in the fall; your names will be entered into a draw for a free membership during the Christmas party. Note that directors will not be taking renewals during the Christmas party.

You may still renew via e-transfer to me. Please do this by December 31 at the latest, for your 2026 membership. Fees are \$40 if you want your ARS Journal in digital format (emailed), and \$55 if you want your ARS Journal printed and mailed to you.

Have a joyous holiday season, and I'll see you in January.



Fatsia japonica (Japanese Aralia)

I decided to take a break from writing about rhododendrons, and write about a different plant.

I chose *Fatsia japonica*, after recently looking at the one I have here in the garden.

It is native to Japan and South Korea.

When I first arrived on the island, the landlords of the suite we rented had one outside in a pot. The plant intrigued me, so I asked about it, and learned what it was and that it was winter hardy for them.

Initially, I thought it was their indoor house plant, so was I delighted to learn it was actually hardy.

Hardiness is listed as being good to -15°C or Zone 7b.

Mine has endured a couple of winters with -10°C without damage. I have it planted under a large cedar, which probably helps.

This plant likes part to full shade, and well drained acidic soil.

It is somewhat drought tolerant when established, but water new plantings regularly.

The shiny leaves have 5-9 divided lobes and are 8-12 inches wide.



Photo taken October 2025

It produces small, off white, round flower clusters in the fall, which become black coloured berries, but I haven't seen them on my plant.

It's a moderate to fast grower, with new growth of 8-12 inches a year. It will form a trunk when it drops old leaves, as it grows.

Ultimately height will be 12-16 feet.

There are a few different cultivars offered in the nursery trade, such as FJ. 'Spider Web' with whitish leaves. Then a variegated form called FJ 'Variegata' and another with long leaf lobes called FJ 'Green Fingers'.

It's a handsome foliage plant, that will give your garden a bit of a tropical look.

Highly recommended if you like great foliage plants.



Autumn Leaves by D. Godfrey

Theme for January Newsletter

Pictures of anything you would like to share

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Newsletter submission deadline is the 15th of each month.

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