

# *the Rhodoteller*

*North Island Rhododendron Society Vol. 40 Number 1 Sept 2025*

## *President's View*

*by Margaret Griffith-Cochrane*



Photo by D. Scott

### NIRS Summer 2025

It is so lovely to be writing to all of you from the new-to-me position of President of the NIRS. I must send grateful thanks to all the members of the club who

have been helping me learn the ropes these past 2 months – thank-you.

I am looking forward to our September meeting, seeing you and hearing about your summers. No doubt I will hear many stories of lots of garden watering, but although the weather has been often “darned hot”, I hope you, like our family, have managed to get in some swimming at a local lake, been out on the ocean, or had some lovely wanders through the woods and local gardens. Aren’t we fortunate to live on Vancouver Island with the many close by opportunities where we can explore the woodlands and see our wonderful native plants. One of the benefits of belonging to a garden

club is there are always new friends to share those garden visits and walks with!

Over the next few weeks one request for you - is to go online and check out the most recent digital ARS journal

<https://www.arsoffice.org/jars/TyZ3n22!u9ka/index.html>

For example, the article on page 44 by Linda Derkach, *Garden Forecast: Hotter Drier, Wetter. Gardening Sense for a Changing Climate* – gives us some good sensible information as we navigate the often surprising weather events that hit us. Linda is from the Mount Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society, and lives just south of us in Qualicum.

A lovely new plant I was introduced to this spring, *Astrantia*, has proven to be a winner in the part shade under one of my rhododendrons. With our grandchildren hunting for fairies, the starry flowers of *Astrantia major*, 'Hadsphen Masterwort' are a delight. Of course like so many gardeners, once curious about a new variety, I now have a number of these lovely starry flowered gems!



Happy Gardening to all of you,  
Margaret Griffith-Cochrane



## *Items of Interest*

### NIRS Annual Picnic







*Ann Bayles received a  
Rhododendron for  
generously hosting the  
NIRS picnic in her  
garden*



*Nadine Boudreau received  
Outstanding Service Award*



*Aubrey & Valerie  
Ferris received  
the Bronze  
Medal Award*



## *Revenue Table*

### *News*

*by Maureen & Judy*

Fall is approaching and according to the experts this is the best time to plant trees, shrubs and perennials. The soil is still warm and anything planted soon will have all winter to make a good root system. If you have any plants to share please bring them to our September meeting for the Revenue Table. It is always interesting and fun to see what other gardeners are growing. We also accept any garden related items such as gently used tools, pots, and ????

And it is time to think about what plants to divide (after we have had some rain) for the next Spring Plant Sale.

## *Sept Meeting Program*

*by Maureen Denny*



## ARS Conference 2025 in Wolfville, Nova Scotia

Judi decided to attend the ARS conference after reading Freeman Patterson's article in the ARS journal. The quote that caught her attention was "Nobody is ever too old to have a happy childhood.". After googling Freeman and discovering he was an award winning photographer and author of 15 books, Judi registered for the conference and post conference tour, as she's been to Nova Scotia twice, but only in January!

Judi has been an active member of NIRS, as Hospitality, Secretary, President, Past President, and received the Bronze Medal for her work organizing the 20th Anniversary of the Rhododendron Gardens, coinciding with the Pilchuk Chapter tour here, and several years later, an exchange visit there. Judi retired in 2008 from VIHA, and started her 2nd career as a Licensed Unity Teacher, where she enjoys speaking, teaching and facilitating weddings. She is currently Secretary for the Municipal Pension Retirees Association, Wine Appreciation Coordinator for Comox Strathcona Probus, Skillbuilders Bridge convenor for Evergreen Seniors, and is rehearsing for a play in November.



Firecracker Mountain Laurel  
Photo by Aubrey Ferris



### *Propagation Updates*

A huge shout out to all those who volunteered to tend to the Rhododendrons through the summer.

Shade cloth raised









## *Rhododendron Garden August Workparty* *by* *Maureen Denny*

Thanks to those who came out Aug 12 to the Rhododendron Garden to weed and prune, quite a pile was created. We were all treated to Antje's delicious Rhubarb cake (rhubarb from Kirk & Yvonne's garden). This was the last summer evening work party. The next work party is Sep 11/25 @ 10:00 am.





## *Ways and Means Raffle*

*by Aubrey Ferris*

### September 2025 Rhododendron Raffle

The first one is a hybrid of Night Magic x Decorum x Dexter's Spice.



We do not have an image of Night Magic but have been told it is a deep purple. So, it will be a surprise when it flowers.

The second plant for the raffle is Mother's Day Azalea.

Bloom Time: Mid-to-late spring.

Flower Color: Bright crimson to rosy-crimson, semi-double trumpet-shaped blooms

Fragrance: Lightly scented

Height & Spread: About 3 feet tall and wide (0.9 meters). It is a spreading dwarf evergreen azalea.

Foliage: Glossy green leaves that turn burgundy in fall

Growth Habit: Upright, bushy, multi-stemmed

## Membership

*by Kathy Haigh*

A big “thank you” to Janet Campbell for her year of volunteering as the Membership Director. She has decided to step down, and I am now filling that position.

As always, your NIRS membership expires at the end of the calendar year, so we collect your renewals in the fall. The only exception to this is for those new members who signed up last spring, whose membership is good for one and a half years.

Membership dues of \$40 may be paid at the meeting by card using Square, cash, cheque, or by e-transfer to [kathyhaighcomox@gmail.com](mailto:kathyhaighcomox@gmail.com). You can find Nadine and I at the membership table beside the meeting check-in area.

The American Rhododendron Society (ARS) has notified the NIRS executive of a change regarding membership fees related to the ARS Journals.

- The ARS will begin issuing three Journals (JARS) effective January 1, 2026.
- All REGULAR members must change to either DIGITAL or PRINT + Digital.
- There will be no dues increase for those opting for DIGITAL JARS. All DIGITAL members must have a current email address on file to ensure delivery of their digital journals. Upon publication, a link to the digital version will be sent to all members.
- Dues for the PRINT + Digital JARS will increase. Members must pay an additional US\$10/year (CDN\$15) if they wish to continue receiving a print journal.
- If you wish to have the PRINT version of JARS you must advise me and pay CDN\$15.
- **We will assume that NIRS members want to receive only the DIGITAL version (which does not have an extra fee) unless you tell me otherwise.**

Please remember to wear your NIRS (or other) name tag. If you wish to order a new NIRS name tag, please let me know as I'll be taking orders. I look forward to seeing everyone at the September 9th meeting.





Photo by D. Scott

*Plant of the Month*  
by Ron Sutton

Rhododendron molle ssp. molle

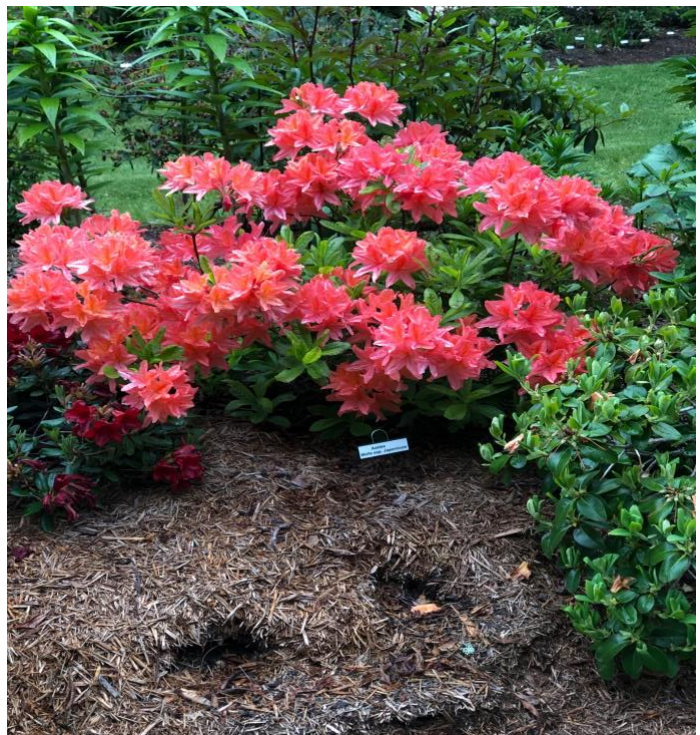
Rhododendron molle ssp. japonicum

I haven't written about an azalea for some time, so for this post I chose a species of deciduous azalea.

Rhododendron molle ssp. molle is a deciduous azalea that is native to China, Rhododendron molle ssp. japonicum is native to Japan.

Both belong to section Pentanthera and have been used to make many hybrids.

The difference between the two molle plants, besides native location, is that R. molle ssp. molle grows a bit smaller, 1-4 feet high, to R. Molle ssp.



japonicum 2-6 feet. It blooms a bit later, flower colour tends to be more yellow, molle japonicum is rarely yellow, and it has soft hairs on its leaves. It's also rare in cultivation, unlike R. molle ssp. japonicum.

The flowers for both open to about 2" wide in trusses of 6-12 flowers.

Both plants bloom before the leaves open, and can sometimes have a fragrance. Both are hardy to -25°C, and prefer full sun.

I have a Rhododendron molle ssp. japonicum, and it is very eye-catching when in bloom. It just seems to glow in the garden.

Photo of my plant taken May 15, 2025

## ***Board of Directors & Committee Chairs 2025/2026***

### **President**

Margaret Griffith-Cochrane 250-941-5559

### **Secretary**

Carolyn Chester 250-619-5864

### **Vice-President**

Nadine Boudreau 250-650-1709

### **Treasurer**

Brian Storey 250-871-8848

### **Director: Ways & Means**

Aubrey Ferris 250-941-8888

### **Director: Membership**

Kathy Haigh 250-702-4311

### **Director: Revenue Table**

Judy Walker 250-339-1146

### **Director: Social Committee**

Antje Guertler 250-338-2306

### **Propagation**

Antje Guertler 250-338-2306

### **Programme Co-ordinators**

Maureen Denny & Judy Walker

### **CVRG Co-ordinator**

Maureen Denny 250-890-0522

### **Sunshine Lady**

Joanne Williams 250-941-2540

### **Publicity**

Sheila Borman 250-890-9500

### **Webmaster**

Ross Griffith-Cochrane 250-941-5559





**Facebook**

Kathy Haigh &amp; Naomi Chester

R. 'Vulcan' by J. Looy

**Library**

Noni Godfrey 250-871-0717

**Newsletter Editor**

Sheryl Murakami 250-871-6254

Newsletter submission deadline is the 2nd Saturday of each month.

[Follow us on Facebook](#)

PO Box 3183, Courtenay BC V9N 5N4

<http://www.nirsrhodos.ca>

