



FRASER SOUTH

RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

A Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society
P.O. Box 3040 Langley, B.C. V3A 4R3

NEWSLETTER

WED. JANUARY 20TH, 1993: MR. JOHN KERRIDGE WILL BE WITH US WHO SPECIALIZES IN PRIMULAS AND COMPANION PLANTS - HE WILL ALSO BE BRINGING SOME PLANTS OR SEEDS OF HIS SPECIAL PRIMULAS TO THE MEETING. MR. KERRIDGE DISPLAYS AT THE NORTHWEST WASHINGTON FLOWER & GARDEN SHOW WHICH IN 1993 TAKES PLACE FEBRUARY 11TH TO 15TH -A SHOW WELL WORTH THE TRIP.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE:

MEMBERSHIP: Chris Ballyn reports the following new members whom we welcome:

Dennis and Janet Primmitt, Fort Langley
Ward and Donna Porter of the new Nanaimo Chapter
Alan and Evelyn Morton, Balsam Crescent, Surrey

We hope to have an updated Membership List for you next month.

MEMBERSHIP DUES for 1993: Membership dues can still be paid up, but for those who fail to renew, this will be your last Newsletter. Cheques may be mailed to Chris Ballyn, 4096 Sunset Boulevard, North Vancouver, B.C., V7R 3Y8, or paid at the January meeting. Dues are as follows:

Full Member: \$30.00 Associate Member: \$10.00

ELECTIONS: - - will take place at our January meeting. The following have agreed to let their names stand for these positions:

President: DON MARTYN Director (3 yr) - Dr. MIKE BALE
Vice-President: NORMA SENN Director (2 yr) - Dr. M.L. TREMBATH
Secretary: LILLIAN EMERSON

Further nominations may come from the floor.

WELCOME: The proposed South Surrey Chapter is to be named "The Peace Arch Chapter", and will meet on the third Tuesday of the month. One can call Mrs. Pat Glennie at 538-2844 for further information as to place, time, etc.

The January Executive meeting will be held at the JOHNSON residence, 13730 111th Avenue, Surrey - 581-5253 on Tuesday, January 26th, 1993 at 7.30 p.m.

AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL

MEETING: ST. ANDREWS ANGLICAN HALL, 20955 OLD YALE RD., LANGLEY

CALENDAR
FRASER SOUTH RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

DATE	EVENT	WHERE?
FEB. 11/15th	Northwest Flower & Garden Show, Washington State Convention Centre, Seattle	Seattle
FEB.17 - WEDNESDAY	Chapter Meeting - Charlotte's Auction to take place? - Speaker?	20955 Old Yale Road, Langley
MARCH 17 - WEDNESDAY	Chapter Meeting - ??	20955 Old Yale Road, Langley
MARCH 21 - SUNDAY	Vancouver Chapter's Plant Sale at Clay's Nursery from 1.00 to 4.00 p.m.	3666 - 224th Street, Langley
MARCH 27 - SATURDAY	Vancouver Chapter's Early Show from 12 Noon to 5.00 p.m.	David Lam Centre, U.B.C.
APRIL 10 - SATURDAY	Fraser South's Plant Sale at Clay's Nursery from Noon to 4.00 p.m.	3666 - 224th Street, Langley
APRIL 17 ?	Our Truss Display and Plant Sale at Willowbrook Mall, Langley (to be confirmed) 9.00 a.m. - 5.00 p.m.	Willowbrook Mall, Langley
APRIL 21 - WEDNESDAY	Chapter Meeting ??	20955 Old Yale Road, Langley
APRIL 28- MAY 2nd	ARS National Convention at TACOMA, Washington - More Particulrs in Spring Journal	TACOMA, Washington
MAY 8/9 - Sat/Sunday	Vancouver Society's Main Show and Plant Sale. Van Dusen Gardens, Vancouver	Van Dusen Gardens
MAY 15 and 16 -Sat/Sun	Unveiling of George Fraser Bronze Plaque at Memorial Garden, Ucluelet - Plant Sale and other events being planned for the Saturday, with a proposed garden tour in Tofino for the Sunday - We would suspect it will be the Gibson garden.	Ucluelet and Tofino.
MAY 19 - WEDNESDAY	Chapter Meeting	20955 Old Yale Road, Langley
	GARDEN TOURS WILL BE ARRANGED AS TIME GOES ON - both Locally and probably Meerkerk/Species Foundation ???	

Your Editors (or whatever!) wish to thank those of you who provide articles - it is greatly appreciated, and not only by us but also our readers - we have a further article from Norma Senn on "Trees & Shrubs for Winter Bloom" which we will have in our February Newsletter; Page 6 contains a letter from our outgoing President, Les Clay, to whom we tender thanks for his great contribution from the commencement of our Chapter 4 years ago, during which time we have prodded him into heading the Chapter which we are confident you will agree he has done so well. At this time we also owe a debt of gratitude to Harold (and Melba) Johnson for his directorship for the past 3 years and his work as Program Chairman - which we are certain he will be pushed (shoved!) into for a long time to come. We also wish to thank Wendy Johannes for filling the gap as Interim Secretary when the Rodgers up and left us for Williams Lake!

MUSHROOM MANURE - To Use or Not to Use

by David Sellars

- A few years after we started growing rhododendrons, Wendy and I became enthusiastic users of spent mushroom manure for mulching and adding organic matter to the soil. Many books, articles and experts advised that it made an excellent mulch and we became convinced of the advantages that many of our rhodies were provided with thick blankets of old, spent mushroom manure.

- Last year, however, we began to notice some plants suffering from yellow leaf condition, probably chlorosis, despite a rigorous and careful fertilizer program. After some research, we began to suspect the mulch.

- We first investigated the composition of mushroom manure. Hank Young of the Compost Division of Fraser Valley Mushroom Cooperative said that mushroom manure is correctly called mushroom compost and is a mixture of peat, soil, horse manure and straw stable bedding.

- While mushroom compost delivered to mushroom growers does not contain lime, we subsequently found that the growers add a casing layer of peat moss and lime to counteract the acid effect when mushrooms are grown. This results in spent mushroom compost containing pockets of lime. Hank Young thought that the pH of spent mushroom compost would be about 6.5 to 6.8. Delp (1987) indicated that spent mushroom manure has a pH of 7.0 or above and our tests indicated a pH of about 7.0. Pockets containing lime probably have an even higher pH.

- According to Cox (1989), rhododendrons generally require a soil between pH 4.5 to 6.0. A pH of 6.0 is ten times more acid than a pH of 7.0. "High pH tends to 'lock up' elements necessary for the healthy growth of rhododendrons; this is particularly true in the case of iron." As chlorosis is associated with iron deficiency it is apparent that our excessive use of spent mushroom compost was the cause of the yellow leaf problem.

- As you can imagine, mushroom manure is now not allowed anywhere near our rhodies. We have started to use screened hemlock bark mulch and our leaf colour has returned to a healthy green.

- One useful by-product of our experience is that we have identified a number of rhododendrons that are tolerant or even enjoy slightly alkaline conditions. A few grew huge root balls in the mushroom compost which, had encouraged us, because growing roots must be more important than growing foliage! You can grow great foliage using fertilizer, but if the plant is root-bound its days are numbered.

- The rhodies tolerant of spent mushroom compost included Lem's Monarch, Irene Koster, Grace Seabrook, Percy Wiseman, Mrs. E.C. Stirling, Mrs. Furnival, Mrs. A.T. de la Mare and Vulcan.

References:

Cox, Kenneth (1989), A Plantsman's Guide to Rhododendrons, Ward Lock Ltd.

Delp, Weldon E. (1987), Soil, pH and Rhododendrons, Important Facts to consider, Journal of the American Rhododendron Society, Vol. 41:4:225.

PRETTY PINKS OF THE PAST

by Dr. M.L. Trembath

• At the outset perhaps I should provide precise parameters for these plentiful, preeminent pinks:

1. Predominantly pastel - small, large and blotched
2. Powerfully pink - small and large

PALE PINKS

SMALL GROWERS

RACIL - (1937) - this dainty plant is the first to come to mind. Unfortunately the name belongs to the grex, and several forms are probably available. The one I grow is surprisingly tall, tho' somewhat sparse, and covers itself with apple blossom pink flowers quite early in April - I'm always happy to see it bloom

PINK DRIFT - I'm putting it in the list only because of its name - it was registered in 1955 - later than the range I'm trying to stay in, a tight grower, small leaved and good natured - just don't expect it to be pink - it's more magenta.

williamsianum hybrids - it could take an entire article to cover them all.

BOW BELLS - (1934) - probably the best known - more than one form about but the commonest one locally grown came from Royston I believe. No need to describe it - a neat plant whose coloured new growth is an added attraction.

BROCADE - (1934) - tho' I have had this for years, it is still struggling, and I remember the blossom as an attractive silvery pink and foliage very colourful.

ARTHUR J. IVENS - (1944) - (tho' he always seems older to me). He gets to be quite a big plant - blooms very pale with a touch of blue in the pink, the new growth also a pallid coppery colour (maybe mine needs a jolt of fertilizer).

TEMPLE BELLS - also a grex name. The form I have had for years is a nice foliage plant, but a very sparse bloomer, and flowers are more nearly rose than pastel pink - other forms have paler flowers, and hopefully more of them.

LARGE GROWERS

PINK PEARL - (pre 1897) - one should always start with Pink Pearl shouldn't one. It received an Award of Merit in 1897, A First Class Certificate from the RHS in 1900, and in 1952 an Award of Garden Merit. - so you can't go wrong - right? Right - if you have the space. There is a plethora of big pastel pinks loosely called "Pink Pearl" types - ANNIE E. ENDTZ, ANTOON VAN WELIE, BETTY WORMALD, MARINUS KOSTER, JAN DEKENS - all Dutch hybrids developed in the '30s and many so similar one is hard pressed to distinguish between them. Slightly more recent additions to the group are MARION and QUEEN MARY. Betty Wormald and Marinus Koster have throat speckling. Jan Dekens has frilled flowers and characteristic wavy-edged leaves - its wood is so brittle that branches snap off if you walk past it quickly. All are more or less readily available, are vigorous and handsome plants - take your choice.

ALICE - (1910) - a nice unassuming pink - no frills, no speckles or blotches, no drooping florets just a nice big plant - she doesn't live in my garden anymore but I wish she did.

CORONA - (pre 1911) - I'm not at all certain that I even know this plant. I've grown one called Corona (came from Len Living) for 20 odd years, and find it so unremarkable that I can scarcely describe it - moderate grower, rather upright branches. Others (Street, Cox eg.) describe it if not in glowing terms, at least as being very distinctive, perhaps the one I have is mislabelled - I've not found anyone who can tell me.

FAGGETTER'S FAVOURITE - (pre 1933) - I confess to being very fond of this plant - scented and silvery pink blooms, good foliage.

GOLDSWORTH PINK - (1933) - a very clean colour in a tall truss. I was disappointed at the short bloom duration but my plant is young and not yet established - Verne Finley assures me that her blooms last and last.

LADY CLEMENTINE MITFORD - (1870) - a sturdy old gal - broader than tall but she grows and grows ; round truss said to be peach coloured. Deservedly well known and frequently grown.

LODERI - (1901) - PINK DIAMOND and VENUS the pinkest of them - now we are talking **BIG** - well worth the room if you can find it - they are always show stoppers with the huge scented trusses. Tho' the cut trusses tend to droop - a Loderi in full bloom is enough to make a rhodie-lover out of the most hardened 'pave-the-yard-and-paint-it-green' criminal.

NAOMI - (1901) - all of them superb plants for foliage as well as bloom, all varying shades of pinks. Probably, like the Loderis, too many named clones that are too similar to distinguish unless you are living with them - but any one well worth growing if you have the room.

BLOTCHED HYBRIDS

CORRY KOSTER - (1909) - a somewhat straggling plant producing rounded trusses packed with frilled pink florets having a darker flare - in prime condition it is spectacular - but, I feel it fades rather unattractively.

MRS. FURNIVAL - (1920) - She's a nice lady, but I personally believe that she and her daughter are frequently confused - either are worth growing.

MRS.G.W.LEAK - (1916) - For a long time I felt I shouldn't like her because my rhodie mentor called her 'that painted whore'. But now I'm old enough to form my own opinions and I do like her very much. I could wish for better foliage - although I don't mind the rather dull olive-tinted leaves, I wish they wouldn't spot so readily.

PRINCE CAMILLE de ROHAN - (1865) & CHEVALIER FELIX de SAUVAGE - (1870) - forerunners of the above hybrids are both available and in some gardens tho' I have never grown either myself.

LADY ANNETTE de TRAFFORD - (1874) - I am very fond of this variety. The plant is neat and moderate grower, foliage has a slightly dusty greyed look but not unpleasant. The truss is neat and pyramidal - florets not huge, but colour a clear pink with a very sharply contrasting dark eye. It blooms very late - mid June and for such a late bloomer the flowers last surprisingly well.

POWER PINKS

SMALL GROWERS

HUMMING BIRD - (1933) - a grex name, differing forms probably around. Nice plant habit and neat 'willie' leaves. Trusses few flowered, bell shaped colour depends on particular form from rosy pink to nearly red.

THOMWILLIAMS - (1921) - as you might expect this plant can become quite sizable in 30 years or so. The foliage, truss and floret shape are typical of the *williamsianum* hybrids. *thomsonii* influence is there in the larger florets of good heavy texture - colour intermediate - a deep rosy pink. Tho' past their peak I was impressed with a bank of these plants in Mr. W. French's garden at Albion. It doesn't seem to be widely grown or available - unfortunate.

LARGE GROWERS

CYNTHIA - (pre 1870) - I'm prepared to fight about this if you wish - it is NOT red - I think of her as a dark rosy pink with a hint of blue that I personally find harsh and unattractive and hard to place with harmony in the garden - so there. I grant you that as a specimen plant all alone somewhere she is quite spectacular - in spite of my rudeness to her she continues to grow apace and bloom prolifically. (In fact I doubt if you could kill the damn thing if you tried)

PILGRIM - (pre 1926) - This for my taste is a very fine plant - big in stature and in bloom, strong pink colour with a splash of deeper colour in the throat, good texture and excellent foliage - an aristocrat.

- Some of the varieties listed with the pales could no doubt be put with the strong pinks - like Betty Wormald, Marinus Koster, Professor Hug de Varies (another Pink Pearl type of which I wouldn't be certain to recognize), and even Mrs. Furnival. I can't bear to omit CORNISH CROSS even tho' we can't grow it here - a superb rosy pink of impeccable breeding.

- You notice that I have few varieties in the strong pink or rose group - in part because it is not a colour that appeals to me and I don't grow many.

OUR 1st FOUR YEARS

A little more than four years ago the Fraser South Rhododendron Society was formed when a fanatical group of 17 Rhodoholics met at the Clay residence. This was November 16, 1988. Of this group, 12 committed to the formation of the Chapter by paying the necessary dues. The executive elected was Les Clay, President; Gerry Emerson, Vice President; Carol Fisher, Secretary; Lillian Emerson, Treasurer; Harold Johnson and Pat Glennie, Directors. A second meeting was held at the Crabb residence December 14. By then our membership increased to 16. The first meeting at our present location, St. Andrews' Church Hall, was January, 1989. The speaker was Frank Dorsey, a member of the Vancouver Rhododendron Society, who spoke on dwarf Rhododendrons. By the time we received official recognition from the American Rhododendron Society, at their spring Board meeting, we had 23 full A.R.S. members.

In 1990, we had our first Truss Show at the Willowbrook Mall and had local garden tours. In June, we had our first picnic at Williams Park. We became involved with the Lily Society, putting on a display at the P.N.E. In October we jointly hosted the Western Regional Conference with Vancouver and Fraser Valley chapters. The year closed out with a successful Christmas party and the Clays'.

The year 1991 saw Harold Johnson organizing our first trip. A tour of Rhododendron gardens in Victoria. We conducted a successful Truss Show and Sale at the Willowbrook Mall and also a plant Sale with the South Surrey Garden Club. The June meeting again was a picnic at Williams Park. Over summer again we joined the Lily Society in a display at the P.N.E. The year closed with a successful Christmas party at the Glennie's.

The year 1992 saw us hold a successful Auction with \$300 Canadian being sent to the A.R.S. Endowment Fund. Harold Johnson again organized a field trip to visit gardens in Victoria. The Spring Truss show and Sale at Willowbrook was a success as was the sale with the South Surrey Garden Club. Our first sale at Clay's was also successful. Again we had a display at the P.N.E. with the Lily Society. In September we tried a Propagation Workshop, which was a success. Chris Klapwijk had discussions with the Langley Parks and Recreation Department re establishing a Rhodo display and test garden in Williams Park where we again held our June picnic. The year rounded out with an excellent Christmas party at Clay's.

In closing, I would like to thank all of you who have served with me as members of the executive and committee members over the four years I have been your Charter President. It is a privilege to be long remembered. We have had good speakers and are developing a commendable library and our newsletter is hard to beat. I am certain that the 1993 executive will carry on in exemplary fashion.

Les Clay