



# Newsletter

MARCH 1993

*A Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society*

*Fraser South Rhododendron Society  
6835 232nd Street  
Langley, British Columbia  
V3A 6H4, Canada*

## **8:00 p.m., March 17, 1993 Meeting**

St. Andrews Anglican Hall  
20955 Old Yale Road, Langley

- Clint Smith from Benjamin's Rhodos, Puyallup, Washington will give a talk and show slides on new plants that he is growing. He will be selling plants at the meeting - varieties not readily available locally.

## **Charlotte's Auction a success**

Our thanks to Charlotte for running a great auction at our February meeting. It was a fun event and we raised \$239.50.☼

## **Fertilizer for sale**

Once again the chapter will be selling fertilizer. Orders will be taken at our March 17th meeting. If you are interested be sure to place your orders then.☼

## **Books, Books and More Books**

Pat Dahl has ordered three new books for our library - Purple Plums, Lilacs and the fourth (and final) volume of Trees and Shrubs by W.J. Bean. ☼

## **Primrose Show, April 24 and 25**

John Kerridge, who spoke at our January Meeting, has advised us that the Primrose Show will be at Southlands Nursery, 6550 Balaclava Street, Vancouver on April 24 and 25.

Anyone wishing to show their primroses should have them at Southlands Nursery by 9:30 a.m., April 24. There will also be some plants for sale.☼

## **Unveiling of George Fraser Plaque**

We received a letter from the Ucluelet and Area Historical Society's Garden Committee thanking us for our contribution towards the George Fraser Plaque.

The unveiling of the George Fraser Plaque will take place May 15 at the Memorial Garden in Ucluelet followed by a plant sale.☼

## Origin of the Species Rhododendron Foundation

*(reprint from the North Island Rhododendron Society  
Newsletter, February 1993)*

Slim Barrett of the Eugene Chapter has written an interesting account of the beginnings of the Species Foundation. A "must see" if you are heading south from Seattle.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s a number of rhodo enthusiasts began to exchange information that revealed they had been raising "species" from seed imported from the best gardens in Britain, but the resulting plants often bore little resemblance to published descriptions of these species. A Species Committee was formed, especially for the purpose of seeking out the finest "true" forms of the species in Pacific Northwest gardens.

A few were easily identified and good examples found, but a great many did not match the authoritative descriptions. About this time one of the committee members happened to visit a lady in England who had supported many plant expeditions to China, and raised countless seedlings from seeds returned. She and her husband selected the finest which were donated to Wisley and destroyed the rest.

Another committee member immediately went to England and made arrangements to take cuttings at Wisley and other fine gardens. The Rhodo Species Foundation was incorporated in Oregon in anticipation of these plants being received. It gets complicated from hereon. Plants imported to the United States have to be fumigated - which killed most of the cuttings. So arrangements were made for plants to be rooted at UBC (Canada does not demand fumigation of incoming plants) and kept there for two years.

Dr. Milton Walker, the prime mover in all of this, offered his property at half price to the Foundation, but they were unable to raise the money. After several more moves for the plants, George Weyerhaeuser was approached in regard to housing the collection on 25 acres on the Weyerhaeuser campus at Federal Way, near Tacoma.

He not only agreed, but spent over \$300,000 improving the land, building greenhouses, lathhouses, offices, etc., and gave financial support for a number of years.

This garden has now been established for some years and is a wonderful place to visit. You will find outstanding rhodos, many companion plants, fern and bonzai collections.

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### You are invited to visit the Rhododendron Species Foundation Botanical Garden

The garden is located on Weyerhaeuser Way South, Federal Way, Washington.

Hours: 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

March, April, May:	open daily
June - October:	open Saturday through Wednesday
November-February:	Sunday through Wednesday

General Admission:	\$3.50
Seniors/Students:	\$2.50
Children under 12:	no charge

The Rhododendron Species Foundation recently sent us a letter of thanks for our membership contribution and enclosed 25 passes at a reduced rate of \$2.00 each. Passes and brochures are available from Lillian Emerson at 888-2952.\*

# ROUGH AND REDDY

(by Dr. Mike Trembath)

**A**nd I thought the pinks were numerous! This list is enormous - even limiting it to those I know or grow, it's still too long. Many are well known and still frequently grown, so I'll try to limit my comments - hybrids are pre-1940 as before.

I will stretch my mouth to accommodate both feet and make the following divisions:

Small growers

Large growers

- a) rosy reds with blue
- b) reasonably red
- c) good reds

## Small Growers

**Carmen** (1935) - dwarf and dark and delightful!

**Elizabeth** (1939) - at least two clones grown here - the Wisley form - larger flowers but perhaps not quite as bright red; what I take as the A.M. form with brighter but smaller flowers. There is Jenny - now I believe called Creeping Jenning, the branches are decumbent and Ostbo's Red Elizabeth - a form with red new growth.

**Ethel** (1940) - mine got stepped on by the dog once too often and expired - but according to Cox it is temperamental - I rather like it.

## Large Growers

### a) Rosy Reds

(You can make a case for some of these being in a deep pink class - my lines are purely arbitrary.)

**Netty Koster** (1945 AM) - this is borderline for red - a leggy rather open plant; since it is a mule the florets have an uncluttered look.

**J.H. Van Nes** (pre1940) - also borderline as to colour - a big upstanding plant and flower - I admire it in other gardens.

**The Warrior** (1867) - definitely a rosy red - I am astounded at the height it has reached in my garden (at least 12 feet) - the rather tight truss is supported by a whorl of leaves giving it the appearance of a nosegay. I find it quite attractive - now that I accept it not being *RED*.

**Nova Zembla** (1902) - as far as I am concerned - the only good thing about it is its hardiness.

**Madame de Bruin** (1904) - I have never grown her myself but often see her in Vern's garden - the new growth seems beloved by whitefly and is often distorted by that insect. Said to be "bright red" but rather blued to my eye.

**Gill's Crimson** (1920) - this was one plant I regretted leaving behind - a big grower and pleasantly early.

**Mars** (1928) - again one I have not grown - a big plant and quite a good deep colour.

**Lord Roberts** - this dark red has a lot of blue in it and I don't much care for him - but hardy and a good habit.

### b) Reasonably Red

**Britannia et al** - I include here the whole batch of the Queen Wilhelmina x Stanley Davis plants - the crosses made about 1922 and registrations up to the 1930s. Most are well known, they vary in colour, habit and leaf appearance and no doubt the cross was repeated - such well known varieties as - **C.B. Van Nes, Earl of Athlone, Unknown Warrior, Langley Park and Trilby**. No comment needed here.

**Bagshot Ruby** (1910), **J.G. Millais** (1915) - I haven't seen either of them for years, but remember them as rather deep but bright red.

**Princess Elizabeth** (1928) - a robust grower with a good big dark red truss with lighter stamens.

**Doncaster** (1920) - tho' this is one more red with dark speckling on the upper lobe - plant habit is refreshingly short and broad. Seems to be not frequently seen, offhand I can't think of another plant that fills the same niche.

**David** (1939 FCC) - perfectly beautiful flower - deep bright red - to my great regret - I can't keep it alive in my garden.

**Romany Chai and Romany Chal** (1932) - the former I have grown but no longer - altho' the colour is acceptable, the thin straggling habit and dreadful foliage make it less than beautiful. The latter is said to be a better plant, etc., but I do not know it.

### **c) Good Reds**

The following list all owe the clarity of their colour (i.e., lack of blueness) to griersonianum in their pedigree. Unfortunately the other trait inherited is the tendency to rather lax trusses so that the plant itself may not be as appealing as the colour of the flower.

**May Day** (1932) - this is my own favourite - it is a grex name so there are several forms about that vary in colour, calyx, and amount of indumentum. The form I grow came originally from Royston, and tho' the calyx is rudimentary, the foliage is gorgeous.

**Vulcan** (1938), **Bonfire** (1933 AM) - the former so well known it needs no comments from me, the latter very similar to Vulcan in flower but a big rangy grower - will fill an entire corner of your garden.

**F.C. Puddle** (1932) - upright grower - pendulous flowers but brilliant colour.

**Hecla** (1931) - also a tall growing and rather sparse plant. The truss is more upright than most of this type but flower texture is crumpled and looks thin - needs shade.✿

## **Early Rhododendron Show and Plant Sale**

**Saturday, March 27**  
**noon - 5:30**

Hosted by Vancouver Rhododendron Society at:

David C. Lam Botanical Centre  
UBC Asian Garden  
(west of UBC Stadium)  
6804 Southwest Marine Drive  
Vancouver

Plant sale during show hours.  
*Admission FREE.*

## **Reminder...Fraser South's Annual Plant Sales**

- Saturday, April 10  
from 12:00 to 4:00 p.m.  
at Clay's Nursery  
3666 - 224th Street, Langley
- Saturday, April 24 from  
9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.  
at Willowbrook Mall, Langley

Diane Scott is coordinating these events. Local growers interested in selling plants are asked to contact Diane at 533-4378 for further information.✿

## **McKee Rhododendrons need our help**

*(by Dr. Mike Bale)*

In a previous article describing the McKee Rhododendrons, (quarterly bulletin of the A.R.S., Vol 15, section 3 of July 15th, 1961) Mr. W.D. Christy provided some background to the origin and nature of the rhododendrons collected and raised by Dr. McKee. The original property purchased by Dr. McKee comprised an area in excess of 100 acres and included a farm as well as woodlands and the site chosen for raising and propagating rhododendrons. The original property was purchased in about 1912 and since that time segments of the property have been sold by the family.

At the present time, the remaining property consists of approximately eight acres and comprises the original homestead and also the site of the early rhododendron plantings. The bludgeoning population explosion of the Fraser Valley has resulted in the development of large tracts of land in and around Abbotsford and includes the original McKee property.

Unfortunately, the remaining eight acres has now been sold and likewise, awaits development as a residential subdivision. As a consequence, the family has offered to donate the existing plantings to the municipal golf course located approximately 1 km east of the original property.

The Fraser South chapter has been asked to assist in the relocation of these plants and to provide advice and expertise to the staff of the golf course.

The chapter is planning to record and identify as many plants as is practical prior to their relocation to sites on the golf course.

Arrangements are in hand to photograph and videotape the rhododendrons as they begin blooming this spring and, in addition, it is hoped that cuttings can be made to distribute among interested members.

If you would like to help in identifying the McKee Rhododendrons, please contact Mike Bale.☼

### *A Nameless Newsletter will never do!!*

The challenge is on - find a name  
for our Newsletter  
and you could win....a rhodo!

Submit as many suggestions  
as you wish  
to Wendy Sellars at 535-0763

or mail them to:

Nameless Newsletter Contest  
16877 - 30A Avenue  
White Rock, B.C., V4B 5E7

**Closing Date: April 15, 1993**

# Fraser South Rhododendron Society

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March to May 1993

<i>March</i>		
<p>Wednesday, March 17th 8:00 p.m.</p> <p>Fraser South Chapter Meeting St. Andrews Anglican Hall <i>Speaker:</i> Clint Smith of Benjamin's Rhodos</p>	<p>Sunday, March 21st 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.</p> <p>Vancouver Chapter's Plant Sale at Clay's Nursery 3666 - 224th Street, Langley</p>	<p>Saturday, March 27th 12:00 to 5:00 p.m.</p> <p>Vancouver Chapter's Early Show David Lam Botanical Centre UBC Asian Garden Vancouver</p>

<i>April</i>		
<p>Saturday, April 10th 12:00 to 4:00 p.m.</p> <p>Fraser South's Plant Sale at Clay's Nursery 3666 - 224th Street, Langley</p>	<p>Wednesday, April 21st 8:00 p.m.</p> <p>Fraser South Chapter Meeting St. Andrews Anglican Hall Cliff Anderson is arranging 3 workshops</p>	<p>Saturday, April 24th 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.</p> <p>Fraser South's Truss Display and Plant Sale at Willowbrook Mall</p>
		<p>Wednesday, April 28th to Sunday, May 2nd</p> <p>ARS National Convention at Sheraton Tacoma Hotel Tacoma, Washington</p>

<i>May</i>		
<p>Saturday, May 8th and Sunday, May 9th</p> <p>Vancouver Chapter's Main Show and Plant Sale at VanDusen Gardens</p>	<p>Saturday, May 15th and Sunday, May 16th</p> <p>Unveiling of George Fraser Bronze Plaque at Memorial Garden, Ucluellet Plant sale on the 15th and proposed garden tour on the 16th --probably at the Gibson garden in Tofino</p>	<p>Wednesday, May 19th 8:00 p.m.</p> <p>Fraser South Chapter Meeting St. Andrew's Anglican Hall</p>