



APRIL 1993

Newsletter

A CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

FRASER SOUTH RHODODENDRON SOCIETY
6835 232ND STREET
LANGLEY, BRITISH COLUMBIA
V3A 6H4, CANADA

8:00 p.m., Wednesday, April 21 Meeting

St. Andrews Anglican Hall
20955 Old Yale Road, Langley

We have an interesting and busy evening planned. There will be workshops set up around the meeting room and you will have enough time to visit them all:

- How to root cuttings by *Harold Johnson*
- Name that species by *Mike Trembath* and *Don Martyn*
- Show and Tell rhodo problems by *Les Clay* and *Norma Senn*
- Plants to keep rhodos company by *Ann Cassels*

Your vote will count

At the April 21 Meeting we will be voting on two changes to our Chapter's Bylaws.

Under Article X - Voting—addition of a new clause:

"c) At all meetings of the Board of Directors, the right to vote shall extend to any member invited to attend by the Board."

Change Article XI - The Board of Directors by deleting clause a) and substituting:

"a) The Board of Directors shall consist of the immediate Past President, the four current officers and the three current directors."

Our thanks to Clint Smith

Fraser South's March Meeting was a real treat. *Clint Smith* showed slides of species Rhododendrons blooming in progression from December to Canada Day. He also brought a number of his fine plants which were quickly snapped up.☼

Welcome to our new members

Katharine and *Frank Brown* of Sechelt joined Fraser South recently.

Our membership is now 70.☼

Our Nameless Newsletter Contest ends April 15

As of this writing we have received 5 submissions—have you sent in yours?☼

BULLETIN BOARD

FRASER SOUTH'S PLANT SALE

Saturday, April 10, noon to 4:00

Clay's Nursery, 3666 - 224th Street, Langley

Members who ordered fertilizer through the Chapter may pick it up at our Plant Sale on April 10. The cost will be \$7.50 per 10 kg bag.

WHIDBEY ISLAND TOUR

Saturday, April 17

Join us for a visit to Meerkerk Gardens, Jim Ramsay's garden and possibly one other garden in the area. We will be car pooling so if you can take an extra person or two or need a ride call Diane Scott at 533-4378. We will meet at Meerkerk Gardens between 9:30 and 10:00 a.m.

More info on Meerkerk Gardens on page 3.

FRASER SOUTH'S TRUSS DISPLAY AND PLANT SALE

Saturday, April 24, 9:00 to 5:00

Willowbrook Mall, Langley

FRASER SOUTH'S LOCAL GARDEN TOUR

Sunday, April 25

An opportunity to visit 2 or 3 of our local gardens. Harold Johnson is organizing this event and will have more details available at the April 21 meeting.

PLANT AND TRUSS SHOW

Saturday, May 8, 10:00 to 4:00

NANAIMO RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

Centennial Building, Beban Park
2300 Bowen Road, Nanaimo

Report on District 1 Presidents' Meeting

by Norma Senn

Nine clubs from District 1 were represented at the Presidents' Meeting held in Nanaimo on March 7.

Mt. Arrowsmith Chapter provided information on the 1995 District Conference. It was proposed to move the 1997 national conference from the Hotel Vancouver to UBC. The change would result in cheaper accommodations and ready access to the botanical gardens at UBC.

There was a brief discussion about the request from A.R.S. for each chapter to begin rating local rhododendrons. Each chapter will form a committee to rate plants within their area.

The Victoria Chapter is currently negotiating a contract to take on the development of a display garden at Government House.

Harry Wright, North Island Chapter, has started a computerized garden inventory of all mature rhododendrons in the area. He has received 23 submissions to date, and expects the project to take about a year to complete.

Current information on powdery mildew will be gathered over the summer and it was proposed a committee be set up to determine the feasibility of having research done. This could be a good project for a Master of Science student.

Endowment funds to support scholarship requests within the District should be discussed at the chapter level, with recommendations to be brought to the fall Presidents' Meeting.✿

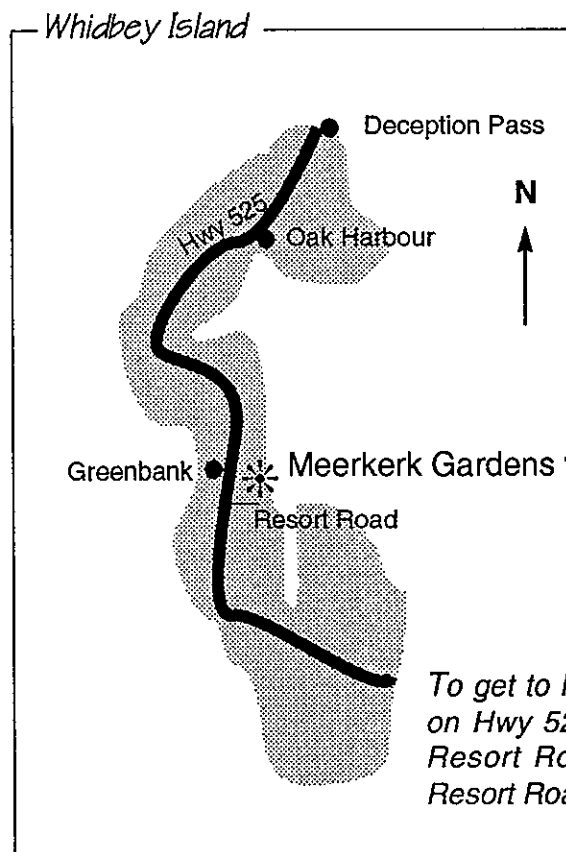
History of Meerkerk Rhododendron Gardens

Today the Gardens have four distinct areas that appeal to many interests. The Heritage Gardens planted by the Meerkerks, the Hybrid Test Gardens, the Display Gardens and the wilderness areas with their nature trails.

These gardens were once the private gardens of Max and Ann Meerkerk. Max and Ann moved to Whidbey Island in 1963. They had been looking for a location without too much sun (Max had an allergy to bright sun) and a secluded spot where they could continue to raise their prize winning dogs. Neither had previous experience in raising rhododendrons.

After moving to Whidbey Island Max and Ann could not help notice the beautiful flowering shrubs that bloomed in profusion along the highways of the Island. These were the Washington State flower, *Rhododendron macrophyllum*.

The Meerkerks started planting rhododendrons on the acreage they had recently acquired. Their search for information about the native and hybrid rhododendrons lead them to several of Puget Sound's well known hybridizers—Lem, Brandt, Ostbo, Larson and Nelson, just to name a few. They also joined the Seattle Rhododendron Society so they could further their knowledge and enjoyment of the genus.



The Meerkerks made arrangements in their will for the Seattle Rhododendron Society to take over the care and maintenance of the gardens and open them to the public. The will states "the Gardens are given for the purpose of actively developing and maintaining a horticultural test and display garden for rhododendrons and companion plants. I have envisioned a careful and methodical development of a peaceful woodland garden, emphasizing rhododendrons and companion plantings. In addition to being of great ornamental value, I would anticipate that the Gardens would be used to test, select, and propagate superior plant materials."*

Rootstalk

by *Indumentum*

A logical extension of being a rhododendron gardener is to be addicted to books about rhododendrons. Just when you think you've read them all, you stumble on another one at some obscure book store or even at your local Fraser South Library!

Rhododendrons in America by Ted Van Veen was published in 1969 and you'd think it wouldn't have much new stuff. Yet it's the only book I've come across that addresses the problem of planting rhododendrons in part shade near native trees. Our local birch and alder are shallow rooted and can suck out the moisture and nutrients from below a precious rhododendron root ball. Assuming you have got rid of the cottonwood, the worst native tree seems to be the Bigleaf Maple (*Acer macrophyllum*). One of ours has roots that extend 20 feet, well beyond the drip line and only a few inches below the ground surface. The Countess of Athlone, Trude Webster and Elizabeth Titcomb have already been moved elsewhere. Mrs. A.T. de la Mare is soon to follow.

Ted Van Veen has a couple of solutions. One is to plant in large containers. The other is to line the planting hole with perforated plastic to exclude most of the tree roots. Nowadays we have landscape fabric readily available, which should work just as well if not better.

Could be a *win, win, win* solution—save the tree, keep the shade and enjoy the rhodo.☼

Fraser South Rhododendron Society Executive and Committees

President: Don Martyn
Past-President: Les Clay
Vice-President: Norma Senn
Treasurer: Larry Chase
Secretary: Lillian Emerson

Directors:
Christopher Ballyn
Dr. Mike Bale
Dr. M.L. Trembath

Membership: Christopher Ballyn
Programs: Harold Johnson
Library: Pat Dahl
Newsletter: Wendy and David Sellars
Publicity: John Haveman
Hospitality: Phil Anderson