



The Yak

MAY 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., Wednesday, May 19 Meeting

St. Andrews Anglican Hall
20955 Old Yale Road, Langley

- **MEMBERSHIP APPRECIATION NIGHT** - your chance to buy, sell, and trade rhodos with other Fraser South members. This event was a real hit last year. Members were able to pick up some real treasures at very reasonable prices. All proceeds go to the seller—no commission for the Chapter.
- Bring some of your favourite trusses to share with other members...or ones you would like to put a name to.
- This time your vote will count (postponed from the April 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."

Big round of thanks to our experts

At our April Meeting members enjoyed visiting four demo tables—how to root cuttings by Harold Johnson; identification of species by Mike Trembath and Don Martyn; examples and discussion of rhodo problems by Les Clay and Norma Senn; and companion plants by Ann Cassels. Our thanks to Harold, Ann, Norma Les, Mike and Don for bringing in lots of plant materials to show us and making the evening a big success.☼

The Yak has arrived

We are pleased to announce our Newsletter has a name—*The Yak*. We had submissions from as far afield as Tofino with a total of 12 names to choose from. *The Yak* was voted in at our last Executive Committee Meeting.☼

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Don Martyn

WILLOWBROOK TRUSS AND PLANT SALE

Thanks to Diane Scott and her crew—Dorothy Griffin, Mike Trembath, Harold and Melba Johnson, Arnie Roeske, Vern and Doc Finley, Sue Finley, Dave and Ella Crabb, John Anderson, Ann Cassels, Lillian Emerson for doing such a great job at the Willowbrook Truss Show and Plant Sale.

We had a great display of trusses in a terrific central location which gave us lots of exposure. Many shoppers stopped and wrote down the names of the rhodos and azaleas. Plants were sold from Clint Smith's, Ann Cassels and Les Clay's materials.

SPECIES, SPECIES, SPECIES

As part of our April Chapter Meeting, Les Clay brought in 10 varieties of species which we sold for \$2.00! As we pointed out at the meeting, the Rhododendron Species Foundation sells species the same size for \$10 to \$15 U.S. Needless to say—Les didn't have to take any unsold species home with him. Our thanks to Les for making these unusual plants available to us so reasonably.

ROOTING TIPS FROM HAROLD JOHNSON

WILLOW WATER RECIPE

Cut up willow branch(es) and put in a container. Cover with hot water and let soak for 24 to 36 hours, strain liquid and put in the fridge. Soak hard to root cuttings for 24 hours. Put cuttings in cutting bed.

Harold has had tremendous success rooting several hard to root rhodos including Queen of Hearts and Lem's Cameo using willow water.

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER

We all owe a special thanks to Les Clay for all of his work and support in the formation, development and operation of the Fraser South Rhododendron Society. Les has spent countless hours making sure everything has run smoothly and that our club has flourished and grown.

On behalf of the members of Fraser South—

*Thank you Les for your hard work as President of the Fraser South Rhododendron Society. We are truly fortunate that you are still so involved in our chapter and the Executive.**

BULLETIN BOARD

FRASER SOUTH'S ANNUAL PICNIC
June 16, 5:30 to dusk
at Williams Park, Langley
(north of 232nd on Glover Road)

It's time to dust off the picnic basket and hunt down the recipe for your favourite potluck dish and be ready when the call comes to remind you about the annual Fraser South Picnic on Wednesday, June 16.

Preliminary Report on McKee Rhodies

by Dr. Mike Trembath

AS A FOLLOW-UP TO THE MCKEE
RHODODENDRONS ARTICLE IN
THE MARCH 1993 NEWSLETTER,
DR. TREMBATH HAS PROVIDED
US WITH THIS UPDATE.

Dr. Mike Bale has been keeping a watching brief on these plants, and has tagged some of them for identification. On April 4, 1993 Don Martyn and myself went to the garden with the hope of making some sort of classification of the plants then in bloom. Mike had tagged about 10 of these, and we added a few more with the following results.

One plant is readily seen as a Triflorum, subseries Yunnanense, and probably davidsonianum. The plant was drawn up to some 20 feet, but with some breaking out at the lower levels. The flowers in smallish trusses, were a rosy-mauve with red markings—quite attractive, and probably worth propagating for its undoubted hardiness.

Another distinctive plant—only some five feet tall and as much in breadth (a late addition—not one of McKee's original plantings?) in full bloom—a flat topped truss 10 to 12 florets per truss; pink florets tubular-companulate, five lobed; pedicel about 1.5 inches; 10 stamens, filaments white, anthers brown, uneven length. The style is white but stigma red and discoid. Lamina are narrowly lanceolate with a floccose white indumentum on the under surface. The leaves show damage from sun, and rather hang down from their petioles. Possibly a neriiflorum hybrid? and I can't help wondering about calophytum as the other parent?—because of the stigma, and overall shape of the plant and leaf carriage—this in spite of the leaf size of 3 to 4 inches.

There were two other distinctive plants—one past its peak of bloom and considered distinct because of its pure mauve florets of a markedly tubular-companulate shape and a size larger than most forms seen in the garden. This was also a smaller and newer(?) plant. The second, distinct by way of a

totally different inflorescence - petioles short and giving the truss a crowded look, florets mauve, some dark speckling on the upper lobes, florets funnel shaped and creased, filaments and style stained red, anthers very dark. Distinctive and strong perfume. Best guess a companulatum hybrid.

The remaining 10 or so marked plants exhibited a range in habit, leaf and flower that all fell, acceptably in our minds, into a classification of Fortunei, subseries Oreodoxa. Leaves elliptic to oblong varying in length from two to four inches. Florets widely companulate, seven lobed, stipling on upper one to three lobes and pastel colour from almost white through soft mauve to pink. One plant with slightly larger blossoms than the "norm" had florets edged in pink and a centre almost creamy—very attractive.✿

Whidbey Island Tour

by Dave Sellars

Like most of April 1993, Saturday, the 21st dawned grey and showery, but several carloads of enthusiastic Fraser South Chapter members headed south through the tulips at Mount Vernon to Meerkerk Gardens on Whidbey Island. Harold and Melba Johnson, as tour guides, arrived first and chased a car with B.C. license plates that headed the wrong way at Greenbank. When the errant car was brought to a standstill with Harold flashing his lights, it turned out the driver was headed for the ferry and didn't know or even care about the difference between a rhododendron and a tetrahedron!

Genuine Fraser South members (who know that a tetrahedron has only four trusses) arrived soon after and included Lillian Emerson, Pat and John Gunderson, Larry and Charlotte Chase, Holly Gordon, Pat Dahl, Wendy and Dave Sellars.

Bill and Mary Stipe welcomed us to Meerkerk Gardens and we had a wonderful time exploring the new Asian Garden and admiring plants in full

flower including some unnamed hybrids developed by Ann Meerkerk. Some of our members were taken with a white rhodo labelled "UNK" and were then surprised to come across another "UNK" that was red with a totally different leaf!

From Meerkerk we drove to Jim Ramsey's garden perched on a clifftop overlooking the Strait of Juan de Fuca. The setting was magnificent and the rhodo collection was in full flower. Over a box lunch the sun came out and Harold gave us a dissertation on how to select the optimum size of garden.

Our last stop was at the garden of Frank Fujioka, another stunning location overlooking the sea. We later found out that Frank is one of the leading hybridizers in the Pacific Northwest. It was particularly fascinating to see all the plants from one grex grown side by side. Although the plants were from the same cross, the differences were amazing and allowed Frank to carefully compare the characteristics and performance of each plant.

Our thanks to Harold Johnson who organized the tours and our hosts, Bill and Mary Stipe, Jim Ramsey and Frank Fujioka, who spent their time guiding us through their wonderful gardens. Frank noted that Canadians are always welcome; the hog fuel they use as mulch is trucked from Burnaby.☼

**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

rootstalk

by *Indumentum*

This is the time of year when rhodoholics are compulsively buying up plants every other weekend (*ed. note—every weekend*) whether they have room for them or not. The ease of moving rhododendrons is always cited as a positive attribute of the plant. The downside is that you can always squeeze a few more in by shuffling a few to the side.

Where do these people get hard-to-find but eminently desirable rhododendrons? It's certainly not at the larger one-stop-shop nurseries that generally have a collection of sun tolerant and hardy rhododendrons that are not that exciting. The labelling is not boring however! We bought five small Jean Marie de Montague at a local nursery for a bargain price a few years ago. What we didn't bargain for was that only two of them were correctly labelled.

The answer, of course, is to find the specialist nurseries. Pre-eminent among local specialist nurseries is Les Clay's where an astounding variety of rhodos can be found. Some of our other chapter members sell rhododendrons on a smaller scale such as Ann Cassels and J&J Nurseries (Jim and Joan Rishel).

Where else to go for those special yak hybrids, desirable species spotted at the UBC Asian Garden or even Lem's Cameo or Loderi King George? C&T Azaleas in South Surrey has some fine species (we bought *R. schlippenbachii* there last year), some interesting yak hybrids and several oldies but goldies. Mandeville Nursery in Burnaby has a surprisingly good collection of yak hybrids. Our favourite 'local' grower is Bernard Nelson near Sedro Woolley, south of Bellingham. With plants dug from the field you always get a big root ball from Bernard—and he has Lem's Cameo and Loderi King George.

Ed. Note: The names of your favourite rhodo sources would be most welcome—drop The Yak a line.☼