



OCTOBER 1993

The Yak

A CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

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

Wednesday, October 20 Meeting

8:00 p.m.

St. Andrews Anglican Hall
20955 Old Yale Road, Langley

Bill Herbst will be our guest speaker this evening. He will talk on the Tower Court Rhododendron Species Collection at Valley Gardens, Windsor Great Park, England. Bill worked for a year as a gardener at Valley Gardens and then worked a second year in the propagation department at Savile Gardens, also part of Windsor Great Park. He will be showing slides of the Tower Court Collection, the most complete rhododendron species collection in the world. Bill now has his own collection of 40 or 50 species in Port Coquitlam where he is Head Gardener for the City.

Lem's Fan

The Fraser South Chapter was very fortunate to have *Gwen Bell* as the speaker at our last meeting. Gwen gave us a fascinating account of the life of Halfdan Lem who started a nursery in Seattle in 1933 after 20 years in the fishing industry in Norway and Alaska. Gwen quoted excerpts from the letters of Halfdan Lem and then treated us to a slide show of some of his most famous hybrids, such as Lem's Cameo and Lem's Monarch. She also showed us slides of new hybrids developed from his plants.

Gwen is an excellent speaker and made Halfdan Lem's letters come to life.

"This 'Cameo' is but the finest of all the rhododendrons I have. I was able to root only

eight cuttings of the 24 last winter and these I hold for my dear life. So you understand how foolish it would be for me to start telling everybody about a prize winning rhododendron when I only have 6-8 plants of it."

"Every night of the year I write one or two or even three letters. Very seldom in my life do I go to bed before midnight. It is usually one o'clock in the morning. A bad habit I brought from Norway with me. Lobster fishing was done only at night."

For those interested in Halfdan Lem, an article by Gwen Bell appeared in the Winter 1988 issue of the ARS Journal. One of his letters was also published in the Fall 1992 issue.✿

Report on Cuttings Workshop

by Charlotte Chase

After giving the matter considerable thought, Larry made a tough decision. This is it. Charlotte will write the report on the Cuttings workshop. Yep, that's the ticket...*delegate*.

So here it is, a secondhand report. It seems that only about 10 people were in attendance. That was all to the good because it enabled Les to identify my little seedlings which I planted at the cuttings class last year. It turns out that the 23 survivors are the species *R. macrophyllum*. Strong and healthy one and all. There will be a sale one of these years. Such a deal you could get.

Not everyone there was a member of our chapter but they all learned something new or of interest. Les divulged a few of his secrets and Larry has already put some of the information to use.

When the class adjourned all the students were graciously escorted to the main building by Chelsea. After removing shoes and promising not to touch, they were treated to a tour of the lab where Clay's Nursery does tissue culture propagation.

Anyone who has not been on a lab tour should make a point to go if the opportunity should present itself again. Larry and I were first introduced to rhododendrons by Mr. Clay Sr. right there at that lab, some 10 years ago. I am sure you will agree that no introduction would be complete without a sale. Now Mr. Clay Sr. was no slouch, we left there with 7 bales of peat, 5 of mushroom manure and last but not least 5 quite mature rhodos. He also saw to it that we were armed with a Greer's Guide to Rhododendrons and pages of notes.

Well off we went home to plough up our yard. We had to rent a rototiller to do the job. We worked from dawn to dusk for 2 days and finally succeeded in planting our treasures in their fine new bed and after having a load of mulch delivered we tucked them in for the winter. The date was November 2 and it snowed the next morning.

More than rhododendrons are propagated at that nursery. Rhodoholics get started there too.

Don't miss the next cuttings class. You never know what could happen there.☼

BULLETIN BOARD

REMINDERS

1994 ARS MEMBERSHIP DUES

We have received the following notice from The American Rhododendron Society

"We regret we cannot send the Winter 1994 (January) issue of the quarterly ARS Journal to members whose dues renewal payments are postmarked after December 1, 1993."

So bring your cheque book to the October meeting or mail your cheque and the 1994 Membership Renewal form (enclosed with this issue of *The Yak*) to Chris Ballyn.

Remember your membership must be received by Chris Ballyn no later than November 15 in order to receive the ARS Winter 1994 Journal.

CHAPTER MEETINGS

Treats for the meetings are always needed. Bring cookies, a square or whatever to share.

We welcome one and all to sell plants at our meetings.

Raffle donations would be greatly appreciated—potted up perennials, rhodos, whatever!

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Interested in visiting the Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden in Federal Way, Washington? Lillian Emerson has Associate Passes available which will admit you to the Garden for just \$2.00. Valid until the end of 1993.

BULLETIN BOARD
CONTINUED

WORK PARTY NEEDED

The rhodos planted at The Anglican Parish of St. Andrew by Fraser South last spring need some TLC before winter arrives. Pat Dahl is organizing a work party for either October 16 or 30 to spread newspaper and bark mulch around the rhodos. Call Pat Dahl if you are available for an hour or so.

B.C. COUNCIL OF GARDEN CLUBS

GET TOGETHER — SATURDAY, OCTOBER 23

9:30 to 3:30 at the Dogwood Restaurant, Hastings and Renfrew Streets, Vancouver. Program includes speaker on creating miniature gardens; speaker from B.C. Nursery Trades Association - "What the B.C. Nursery Trades Association does and how it relates to Garden Clubs; Dave Ormrod from Ministry of Agriculture and Food speaking on "Disease Control". Registration fee \$13 per person (includes buffet lunch). Plant sale prior to meeting and at noon. Contact V. Mackintosh at 942-6124

FRASER VALLEY ORCHID SOCIETY

SHOW AND PLANT SALE

OCTOBER 30, 10-6 & OCTOBER 31, 10-3

White Rock Town Centre Hall, 15150 Russell Avenue, White Rock, Admission: \$4.00.

NORTHWEST FLOWER & GARDEN SHOW

FEBRUARY 9-13, 1994

Washington State Convention Centre. Norma Senn is organizing a tour group to attend this show. Contact Norma if you would like to join her group.

NAME PINS FOR CHAPTER MEMBERS

At the October Meeting samples of newly designed name pins will be on display. Cost is \$4.95 plus tax. Have a look and sign up for one if you are interested.

Gardening as Therapy—Canuck Place needs our support

At the September Executive Committee meeting, the Executive voted to make a donation of \$100 to the Children's Garden at Canuck Place. Canuck Place, which is scheduled to open in the autumn of 1994, will provide a warm, welcoming home-away-from-home atmosphere for terminally ill children and their families from all over British Columbia.

The following is an excerpt from the Spring 1993 newsletter published by Canuck Place .

"Do you remember your grandmother's garden? The garden at home was nice, but your grandmother's garden was special. There were hiding places and picnic spots, mint that you could pick for tea, birds you never saw anywhere else, cherry trees and raspberry canes, and a creaky old swing on the porch. It was a place for make believe, a place for play, a place to be alone sometimes and think about serious thoughts."

"Many of us have similar memories of gardens we loved as children. Now, there is an opportunity to generate ideas that would create that kind of garden again—on the grounds at Canuck Place."

"The Edwardian mansion in the centre of the garden has been known for eighty years as Glen Brae. It stands in Shaughnessy, at the corner at Matthews and Marguerite. Children and their families will come here from all over British Columbia. Some of their happiest, most treasured moments may be spent in the garden."

"The development of the garden begins with the purchase of the grounds. And that's where you come in—you and Royal LePage. The Royal LePage family in B.C. has committed their sales force of over 900 men and women to sell symbolic deeds which represent a portion of the garden. Each square foot is valued at \$100."

"The funds raised will help buy the garden area and pay the costs of labour, landscaping and special features."

Fraser South invites all garden enthusiasts and clubs to join in this worthwhile project. Contact your local Royal LePage office for more information. For a copy of *Canuck Place News* call 687-0304.☼

Rhododendron Poll



The votes are in! At the September meeting members were asked to list their 10 favourite rhododendron plants—those they couldn't live without. Separate lists were also requested for 10 favourite species and 10 favourite hybrids. The idea was to identify the best rhododendron plants for our area.

The results illustrate that, as ever, our tastes are eclectic. There was some agreement, however, on the top four plants. *R. yakushmanum* was the clear winner followed by 'Lem's Cameo', 'Grace Seabrook', and 'Taurus'. Another ten plants received two votes each and others were only mentioned once. So the top 10 has to be the top 14.

FOURTEEN FAVOURITE PLANTS

	<i>Number of Votes</i>
<i>R. yakushmanum</i>	5
'Lem's Cameo'	4
'Grace Seabrook'	3
'Taurus'	3
'PJM'	2
'Lem's Monarch'	2
'Point Defiance'	2
<i>R. campylogynum</i>	2
<i>R. kiusianum</i>	2
'Loderi King George'	2
'Nancy Evans'	2
'Avalanche'	2
<i>R. augustinii</i>	2
'Olive'	2

There was much more agreement, surprisingly on the species. *R. yakushmanum* won again (must be the influence of *The Yak!*) and seven others gained three votes each.

TEN FAVOURITE SPECIES

	<i>Number of Votes</i>
<i>R. yakushmanum</i>	5
<i>R. calophytum</i>	3
<i>R. bureavii</i>	3
<i>R. campylogynum</i>	3
<i>R. arboreum</i>	3
<i>R. schlippenbachii</i>	3
<i>R. augustinii</i>	3
<i>R. davidsonianum</i>	3
<i>R. sutchuenense</i>	2
<i>R. decorum</i>	2

The ten favourite hybrids proved difficult to evaluate as few had entered this event, the first two examinations proving quite testing. The poll was topped by 'Taurus' closely followed by 'Point Defiance'. Surprisingly absent from the lists were *yakushmanum* hybrids and *williamsianum* hybrids. A number were mentioned but none more than once. Perhaps there are too many of them for any one to gather many votes—rather like political parties in Alberta.

TEN FAVOURITE HYBRIDS

	<i>Number of Votes</i>
'Taurus'	4.5
'Point Defiance'	3.5
'Etta Burrows'	2
'Top Banana'	2
'Lem's Monarch'	1.5
'Olive'	1.5
'Nancy Evans'	1.5
'Lem's Cameo'	1.5
'PJM'	1.5
'Grace Seabrook'	1.5

Note: half a point was awarded if the plant was also included in the list of 14 favourite plants. ❁

Recently Dave and Ella Crabb moved from Langley to Qualicum Beach. Dave and Ella gave so generously of their time and support in so many areas—the newsletter, garden tours, opening their garden, helping with plant sales, sharing their enthusiasm and knowledge, welcoming new members, livening up the meetings, etc.

We are going to miss you, Dave and Ella—we wish you all life's best in your new home and garden.

Some Thoughts on leaving 5319 - 234th

by Ella Crabb

Don Martyn asked that we make a list of our favourite plants we were to take with us to Qualicum. However, we are not necessarily taking our "particular favourites" due to size, etc. Some are coming simply because of sentimentality, such as the \$2.00 *R. sutchuenense* we got from Les Clay which is now a full grown, lovely plant, the last plant bought from Milton Wildfong, the plant we received as a gift from Milton, a plant Doc Finley threw at Dave one day as a dying cross, the plant Dave won his first prize with, the famous 'Lem's Stormcloud' (readily available these days, but it is coming along!), the 'Teddy Two' hybridized by Dr. Mike and Vern Finley. They all carry memories but may not be everyone's choice plants.



However, hindsight tells us that every *LARGE* garden should have a collection of the larger background plants, such as 'Pink Pearl', the 'Loderi' group, the 'Naomi' group, the 'Wallopers' group, 'Prelude', 'Idealist', 'Arthur Bedford', 'Bud Flanagan', 'Mrs. A.T. de la Mare', 'Van Nes Sensation', 'Beauty of Littleworth', 'Mrs. Charles E. Pearson', 'Mrs. E.C. Stirling', 'Mrs. G.W. Leak', 'Countess of Athlone' and 'Countess of Derby' (even 'Anna Rose Whitney'), the later blooming 'Old Copper', 'Autumn Gold', 'Tortoiseshell Wonder' and 'Maryke', 'Catabiense Grandiflorum' and 'Boursault', the early flowering 'Taurus' and 'Grace Seabrook' (which can grow into large plants), and of course,

'Cunningham's White', 'Helene Schiffner' (which doesn't grow quite as tall).

We started off by concentrating on having bloom from March through to June, without any regard to size, etc. so naturally we had a lot of moving to do through the years. Then we got tied up with colour—too many reds, so we spent a year looking for whites, then we concentrated on trying to get the fragrant ones—and on it went.

Another two favourites of mine are 'Ilam Violet' and 'Goldstrike', which grown together give a splash of colour in late April or so. Then you need a few *R. augustinii* which takes you into the species world—took us years to understand the species—still trying. And here again we blundered by collecting *R.*

hodgsonii, *R. macabeaeanum*, *R. sinogrande*, and a few others that were too tender for our hillside but can be grown successfully in more sheltered spots such as Tofino! One mustn't forget *R. schlippenbachii*, *R. albrechtii*, and especially *R. lutescens*, the early yellow one. We then got carried away with the *R. bureavii* species, and of course *R. yakushmanum* and all its crosses.

I think our favourites are probably not everyone's choice—we have a 'Sir Charles Lemon', *R. yakushmanum* 'Exbury', 'Grosclaude' x 'Metternichii' (of Finley parentage), 'Repens' x *R. calophyllum*,

'Lady de Rothschild', *R. bureavii*, 'Igtham Yellow', 'Hansel', 'Canadian Sunset', 'Goldstrike', 'Ilam Violet', 'Pink Cherub', 'Conroy' x 'Biskra', 'Lionel's Triumph' (and as for it, we have had it for 7 years, haven't seen it bloom yet, but still it is coming with us!), 'Sunny Day', 'Susan' coming with us for one reason or another—and many others too big to move, such as 'Frontier', 'Carita', 'Alice', 'Alice Street', 'Isabel Pierce', etc.

On leaving the District (but not the Chapter!) we have a word of advice for those just entering the rhododendron world. You have some real experts in the Chapter, and you will even get to love them as the years go on! I remember coming home with *R. lutescens*, which against my wishes I was talked into buying—well they were right and I was dead wrong—so from then on if any of the real knowledgeable members advised me to buy something I didn't really think worth spending money on, I went ahead and did it. Do give a plant a couple of years to show its metal, maybe even longer, **AND READ A LOT**. Mind you, you can sometimes just buy a poor plant that will never do anything for you, while your neighbour may have the same plant, winning prizes with it.

One does have to be a bit selective on planting, remembering that the larger leaves need shelter from the wind, without shading them too much. For 10 years we have been very stubborn about the mulching and this was one area where we were determined to go on our way—after all, they grow wild in Scotland and no one weeds there. However, I believe we are to mulch our plants at Qualicum. So do your own thing to a great extent and have some fun.

Ten years ago when we moved from the North Shore to Langley we asked friends and neighbours to visit us in Langley, some did, some didn't! So once again we say, do come and visit us when on the Island. Our address will be on the membership list, and we have all intentions of coming over for the picnic.☼

rootstalk

by Indumentum

I have been consulting with the experts lately and a consensus seems to be emerging—rhododendrons will grow! This may come as a surprise to those just starting out with their first acquisitions. You stick them in the ground and nothing seems to happen for months.

One of the problems you eventually have to face is that the standard spike sprinkler no longer reaches over the plants and instead of irrigating a 70 ft circle you end up with 10 ft. To avoid spending a lot of money on an elevated sprinkler at a fancy garden tool shop you can always raise the standard sprinkler head using bits and pieces from your local hardware store. You will need a longer spike base (available from some nurseries); add any length of half-inch galvanized threaded pipe and screw the standard sprinkler on top using a half-inch coupling.

Another problem is moving plants once the rootballs get too heavy to lift into the wheelbarrow. Ken Ladd in Maple Ridge has fabricated a plywood extension to the bucket on his garden tractor. Most of us don't have big enough gardens to warrant buying a tractor. Recently, however, hand trucks with inflatable tires have become available at reasonable prices. I bought one of these mover's dollies to move large rocks round the garden. By drilling three holes in the bottom plate, it's easy to bolt a piece of half-inch plywood to extend the plate. Simply slide the rootball onto the plywood and trundle your rhodo to its new spot.