



NOVEMBER 1993

The Yak

A CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

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

Wednesday, November 17 Meeting 8:00 p.m.

St. Andrews Anglican Hall
20955 Old Yale Road, Langley

RHODODENDRONS THAT I'VE KNOWN AND GROWN BY GARTH WEDEMIRE

Garth Wedemire will present a slide show of some of his favourite rhododendrons that he has cared for and admired over the past 15 years. Some of the slides will be from his two-acre garden in Maple Ridge where he has grown over 400 plants include some very large species. He will also include some photographs of the rhododendron collection at the UBC Asian Garden.

Garth joined the Vancouver Chapter in 1975 and was Membership Chairman and Newsletter Editor for a number of years. He received the ARS Bronze Medal from the Vancouver Chapter in 1989. In 1987 he was one of the founding members of the Fraser Valley Rhododendron Society and was the first President. When not growing rhododendrons Garth teaches computer studies at Centennial School in Coquitlam.

————— Spectacular Species —————

Bill Herbst gave us a dazzling slide show of Valley Gardens and Savile Gardens at our October meeting. Bill worked in Windsor Great Park, England for two years and his presentation focused on the famed Tower Court Collection of rhododendron species. Some of his slides drew gasps of amazement from the audience, in particular a huge specimen of *R. sutchuenense* in full flower. There were even larger gasps when he told us that every rhododendron in the park was deadheaded.

"You have got to go at it with two hands", he explained, "in order to make any progress." Bill divided his species presentation into series and brought along some of his own plants to explain species classification. In addition to photographs of relatively common species such as *R. augustinii*, *R. bureavii* and *R. wardii*, we were treated to slides of tropical species grown in the large greenhouse at Savile Gardens including *R. stenaulum* and *R. jasminiflorum*. ☼

New members to welcome

We are pleased to welcome Linda Taylor of South Surrey and Carol Pizzey of Gibsons to Fraser South.✽

Saturday Mulch

The rhododendron work party at St. Andrews Anglican Church was a mulching success. Pat Dahl's enthusiasm encouraged eleven Fraser South members to help St. Andrews Anglican Church improve the rhododendron garden started by Fraser South a year ago. Les Clay donated five more large rhododendrons and the Church and Fraser South bought a unit of bark mulch.

Particular thanks are due to Dennis Dahl for without his tractor we might still be there. In addition to Pat and Dennis, Fraser South members in full gardening gear included John and Janet Warner, Chris Ballyn, Wayne MacDonald, John Anderson, Arnie Roeske, Sandy Paul and David and Wendy Sellars.

The garden now looks terrific, particularly from Fraser Highway—drive by and take a look.✽

Fraser South Annual General Meeting Wednesday, January 19, 1994 (in conjunction with our regular program)

We regret to advise that Don Martyn has resigned as President because he has 'gone back to school'. Norma Senn, our current Vice-President, has graciously accepted the position of President. Congratulations, Norma!

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Nominations are open for two positions on the Executive:

- Vice-President
- Director - 3 years

If you would like to be a member of the Executive or would like to nominate someone, please call Les Clay at 530-5188.✽

BULLETIN BOARD

REMINDERS

FRASER SOUTH'S CHRISTMAS PARTY Monday, December 13 St. Andrews Anglican Church

This year our ever-popular Christmas party (the best attended meeting of the year) will be at our regular meeting place so we will have lots of room. As in the past it will be a potluck dinner. The phoning committee will be contacting you with more details.

Please note there will not be a chapter meeting on Wednesday, December 15.

THE YAK WILL BE BACK IN EARLY JANUARY

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL DUE

As noted in the October issue of *The Yak*, membership renewals must be received by Chris Ballyn by November 15, 1993 in order to receive the ARS Winter 1994 Journal.

The Rhododendron Species Foundation has our support

At the October Executive Committee Meeting it was agreed that Fraser South would renew its membership with The Rhododendron Species Foundation.

Membership in the Foundation benefits our members with access to exclusive plant, seed and pollen offerings, reduced admission into the Garden, and a superb newsletter which is available from Fraser South's library.✽

Harold Johnson

Harold Johnson's many friends will be very saddened to learn that Harold passed away recently. At our October Chapter meeting Vern Finley helped us pay a tribute to Harold with the following words:

Today we say good-bye to Harold Johnson. You will each remember him through your own encounters. I liked to listen to him chat enthusiastically about his past—The Bakery—working in the forest—and then the meat brokerage industry.

He loved to travel and made so many lasting friendships through the Rotary Club and Rhododendron Society.

Harold became a member of the Vancouver Rhododendron Society in 1970. He said he attended meetings for three years before anyone asked him 'why he was there'. He has been showing us ever since 'How to make people comfortable'. Francisca Darts still remembers him greeting members and guests at the door as they arrived at meetings. Harold has been a participating member. He has served as Director, President of the Vancouver Rhododendron Society, Regional Director to the National Board and Director of the Fraser Valley Chapter. He attended all the National Conferences and many Western Regional Conferences and all meetings at the local level when he was in town. We should label him '*Man in Motion*'. He toured the Pacific Northwest looking for new and old gardens to add to the bus tours that he organized and hosted.

I would have enjoyed listening in on his meeting with MacMillan Bloedel explaining to them how they could improve their public image if they were to protect the rhododendrons on their property at Rhododendron Lake and allow access to the public. Harold and Clive Justice were instrumental in getting the company to declare the area a reserve and, at considerable expense to the company, improve the 9.5 mile road and clear the area involved for better viewing.

Harold received the Bronze Medal at club level and the Silver Medal at National level for his interest, dedication and hard work in assisting the formation of the new chapters in the district.

We are so fortunate to have had this long, close association with Harold sharing our common interest in our gardens and with our '*rhodos*'. He loved the rhododendrons.

He will be fondly remembered and greatly missed.

Vern Finley

Our thanks to Ella Crabb for sharing these thoughts:

Returning from Harold's funeral and the meeting at Fraser South on October 20th, I had the following thoughts running through my mind, and would like to see it on record just how much Harold contributed to our Chapter, and how fortunate we were to have had him as our active member from the inception of the Chapter.

The first book in the library was a gift from Harold and Melba. He was our first three-year Director, and willingly took on the position. Harold hardly ever missed an Executive meeting or a regular meeting. Harold arranged the out-of-town bus trips—and as he knew practically *EVERYONE*, he could call upon the Weesjes, the Vartnous and all the others and they would gladly accommodate him, or Bill Dale would do it for him. He was our Program Chairman throughout his four years—again because of his wide association with the ARS when he called upon speakers from south of the border, they were ready to be with us—mostly hosted by Harold and Melba, they not only bed and breakfasted our speakers, they also toured them around locally the following day—and this they did gladly and thoroughly enjoyed doing it.

Harold was the one who at a time when \$600.00 was a rather inviting sum for us, introduced the Chapter to the possibility of going along with the Lily Society in a display at the PNE four years ago. This was because of his association with the Lily Society and he and Del Knowlton had come up with the possibility. He practically single-handedly arranged that first exhibit with help at the set up from Les, Butch, Dave and Sandy. Melba and Harold attended the PNE more that first year and sat with the brochures at the table than all the rest of us put together! Once again Harold was enthusiastic about the improvements for the following years, and he loved adding his precious plants to the exhibit.

At the Willowbrook plant sales you could depend on Harold and Melba to arrive with their trusses all well marked for display.

Harold carried out all this in spite of the fact that there were times when his arthritis was giving him much pain—but did we ever hear him complain?

We shall remember Harold for his stories—about his Willow Water—his "fast" manure and many many more—how fortunate and thankful we should all feel for having known a man such as Harold.

Is it not possible for our Chapter to perpetuate his memory in some way?

October 1993
An interested member!
Ella

In the November issue of the Eugene Chapter's newsletter they extended their heartfelt sympathy to Melba and family.

...His optimism, joie de vivre and unstinting service given year after year to the Society will be long remembered. Many owe their introduction to rhododendrons and to membership in the Society to Harold's enthusiasm.✽

Footstalk

by *Indumentum*

The November issue of the Eugene Chapter Newsletter notes that rhododendrons in the Eugene area did not set buds very well this year. Plants that are half yak have particularly poor buds but early bloomers have good buds. It was suggested that maybe there wasn't enough sun or heat especially in the shaded areas during the cloudy summer.

The plants in our garden exhibit similar characteristics. 'Grace Seabrook' has lots of big buds but the yak crosses have set only about 25 percent of the potential buds. I am reluctant to blame the weather as the wet summer more closely resembled the conditions in the natural habitat of rhododendrons in Asia¹. Furthermore, the hot, dry spell at the end of the summer is said by the experts to be particularly conducive to bud-set.

Perhaps another explanation could be annual cycles. The Winter/Spring of 1992 was particularly warm and many rhododendrons bloomed early leaving more time for new growth and setting of new buds. Many people remarked on the good bud-set in the fall of 1992 which resulted in an excellent blooming season the following year. The plants may have put out so much effort in the big bloom last Spring, that there was less energy to spare for bud-set this fall. Many species follow this pattern to the extreme, only flowering every other year. Anyone got any better ideas?

¹For a comparison of the climatology of southwestern China and the Seattle area see the ARS Journal, Spring 1990, page 71.