



JANUARY 1994

The Yak

A CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

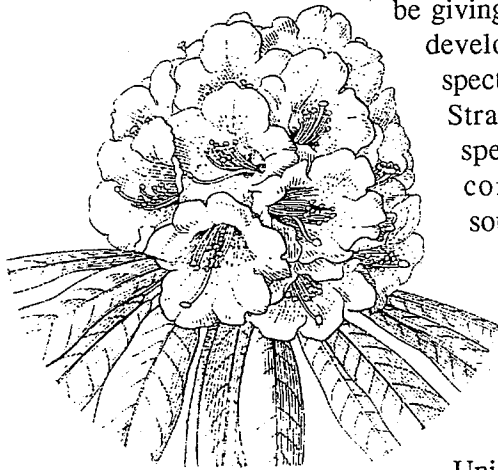
FRASER SOUTH RHODODENDRON SOCIETY
6835 232ND STREET
LANGLEY, BRITISH COLUMBIA
V3A 6H4, CANADA

Wednesday, January 19, 1994 Meeting 8:00 p.m.

St. Andrews Anglican Hall
20955 Old Yale Road, Langley

GUEST SPEAKER: PETER WHARTON **"ASIAN GARDEN ASPIRATIONS"**

Peter Wharton, Curator of the David C. Lam Asian Garden at the University of British Columbia will be giving a slide show of the Asian Garden and will outline plans to develop new areas of the garden. The Asian Garden occupies a spectacular wooded site on a west facing slope overlooking the Strait of Georgia. It contains one of the finest collections of species rhododendrons in North America and the intent is to continue increasing the collection particularly from wild sources. In support of this objective, Peter Wharton is planning a plant hunting expedition next Fall to an unexplored area of China close to the Sichuan border. He will outline his plans for the trip as part of his presentation.



Peter Wharton obtained a degree in forestry from the University College of North Wales in Bangor and continued his education in arboriculture at the Merrist Wood Agricultural College. He worked for Northern Tree Surgeons in West Yorkshire and came to Canada and worked for Citadel Tree Service in Richmond. He has been curator of the UBC Asian Garden since 1975 and also teaches a woody plant materials course at the UBC School of Landscape Architecture.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND ELECTIONS

Wedemire Vignettes

At our November meeting, Garth Wedemire provided us with seven vignettes demonstrating aspects of rhododendrons that he has known and grown.

The first two vignettes were slides of Ken Gibson's garden in Tofino and some favourite hybrids including 'Everything Nice', 'Exbury Calstocker', 'Praecox' and 'Snow Lady'. Rhododendrons growing in Como Lake Park, Coquitlam were followed by slides of species and yaks. One of the most interesting vignettes was on rhododendron foliage with close-ups of leaf bracts demonstrating the great variability in the genus. The final group of slides was on the UBC Asian Garden which wrapped up a fine presentation.✿

New members to welcome

We are pleased to welcome Barbara Maestri of Langley, John and Maureen Tapp of Aldergrove, and Rob and Jennifer Bishop of South Surrey to Fraser South.✿

Fraser South's Christmas Party

First—a very sincere *thank you* to Les and Bev Clay for hosting our Christmas Party at their lovely and spacious home. The food was scrumptious and the "name that rhodo" contest was once again a challenge.

Thanks to Diane Scott, Lillian Emerson and Bev Clay (most of all) for organizing another successful event.✿

Library News

Pat Dahl has added a new book on Primulas to our Library collection. **Reminder**—all books borrowed must be returned at the January meeting.✿

Dartshill Donation

It was recently reported in the Vancouver Sun that Francesca and Ed Darts will be donating their garden to the City of Surrey. This news is particularly exciting to rhodoholics as Dartshill contains many fine rhododendron hybrids and some large species. Fraser South had a tour of Dartshill in April 1992 and many of us remember the huge *R. arboreum* and *R. fortunei* in full flower.✿

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SPRING 1994

NORTHWEST FLOWER AND GARDEN SHOW
FEBRUARY 9-13
WASHINGTON STATE CONVENTION CENTER
SEATTLE

FEBRUARY 16 CHAPTER MEETING
SILENT AUCTION WITH OUR FAVOURITE
AUCTIONEER—CHARLOTTE CHASE. MEMBERS
ARE ASKED TO BRING TREASURED ITEMS FOR
AUCTIONING OFF AT THE MEETING. PROCEEDS
RAISED GO TO OUR CHAPTER.

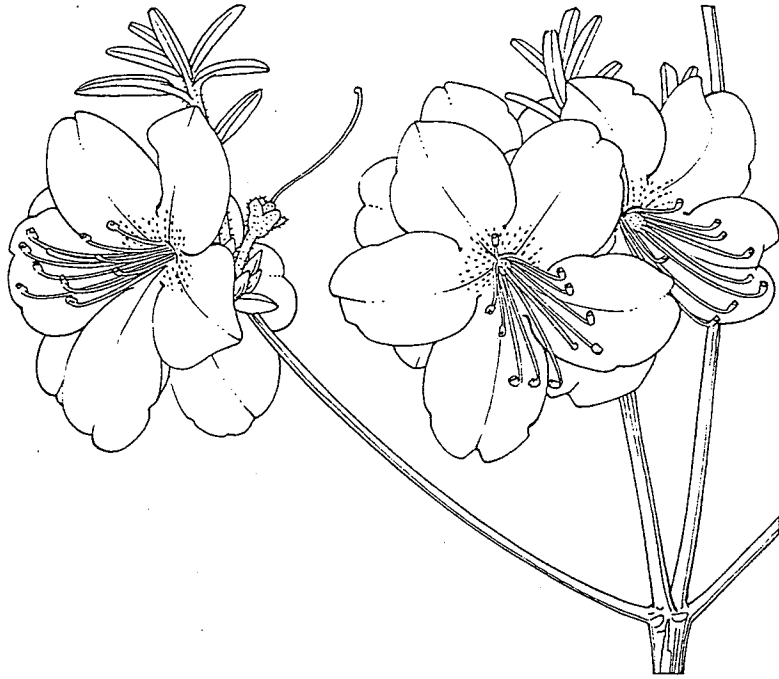
MARCH 16 CHAPTER MEETING
GUEST SPEAKER: ALLEYNE COOK, "MAGNOLIAS
AND OTHER COMPANION PLANTS FOR
RHODODENDRONS"

FRASER SOUTH SPRING PLANT SALE
SUNDAY, APRIL 3
CLAY'S NURSERY
3666 - 224TH STREET, LANGLEY

APRIL 20 CHAPTER MEETING

FRASER SOUTH'S WILLOWBROOK TRUSS SHOW
AND PLANT SALE
SATURDAY, APRIL 30
WILLOWBROOK MALL, LANGLEY

SPECTACULAR SPECIES



R. schlippenbachii

The Royal Azalea, *R. schlippenbachii* is often considered to be the finest azalea species. It occurs in drifts of tens of thousands as an understory plant in Korea and northeast Manchuria and can reach a height of 15 feet. The flower is exquisite, fragrant, star-like and delicate, and the colour defies accurate description. Pale pink to rose-pink according to Cox, but light purplish pink to strong pink according to Galle. Delicate lavender-pink with a white throat may be more accurate. As a bonus the leaves provide gorgeous reddish fall colour.

This deciduous azalea was discovered by a Russian naval officer, Baron A. Von Schlippenbach in 1854. The plant was introduced to Japan much earlier, however, under the name Korufune Tsutsuji which means 'foreign ship'.

It has been reported as difficult to grow, eccentric and unhealthy and has been nicknamed 'slipping backward'. It certainly didn't do very well the first year we planted it. The leaves turned dark brown in the summer and dropped off. We moved it to a location with more afternoon shade and it has since flourished.

As a lovely, hardy plant, with an exquisite flower and fall colour, it is not as commonly seen as one would suppose. There is a group of *R. schlippenbachii* planted unexpectedly in a shady grove of conifers at the park behind the cemetery in Fort Langley. Despite the dry conditions and dense shade they are not doing too badly. We've never seen them in flower as we only pass by during the soccer season on our way from the parking lot to the pitch. So I suppose this rare sighting needs to be confirmed by an expedition in early May.

David Sellars

**NORTHEAST REGIONAL CONFERENCE
DANBURY, CONNECTICUT
OCTOBER 29-31, 1993
BY LES CLAY**

As District 1 Director, I attended the fall A.R.S. Executive Meeting which ran in conjunction with the Northeast Regional Conference. Danbury is a rather picturesque area situated in rolling hills about 90 miles southwest of Hartford. There were still traces of great fall colour although many of the trees had dropped their leaves. Attendance at the conference was approximately 200.

The opening speaker, Dr. Howard Pfeiffer spoke on the gardens of Scotland, including Crarae, Youngers, Leonardslee, Brodick, and the Royal Botanic Gardens. Many of these gardens will be visited during the 1996 A.R.S. conference in Oban, Scotland.

On Saturday, the first speaker was Wayne Mezett of Weston Nurseries speaking on "Choosing Sensible Rhododendrons for Challenging Sites". Weather conditions are much more severe than on the Pacific Coast and they must contend with deer and rabbits. Weston developed PJM and many other hardy lepidotes.

Mary Beasley, owner of Transplant Nursery in Georgia spoke on the native azaleas of Georgia. Herb Spady, A.R.S. Western Vice-President showed slides of his trip to Sikkim. The scenery was terrific and there were many slides of the large leaved species. In the afternoon, Capt. Richard Steele spoke on hybridizing in Nova Scotia. The blooming period there is relatively short, from about the 12th to 24th of June. Only the hardiest varieties will tolerate the growing conditions and the deer problem. Lynn Watts owner of the Greenery in Bellevue, Washington spoke on indumented Rhododendron species. Jonathan Leonard, owner of Briarwood Gardens wrapped up the afternoon with a presentation on "Something New—The Schumachi Hybrids".

The banquet speaker was Dick Murcott speaking on "The Problems Facing Rhododendrons in the 21st Century"—an amusing lecture on why we are not selling the public on rhododendrons and what we can do to be more effective.☘

rootstalk

by Indumentum

In the November issue of *The Yak*, I raised the subject of the poor bud-set in the fall of 1993 and concluded that the wet summer was not to blame as it closely resembled the conditions in the natural habitat of rhododendrons in Asia. However, in the Fall 1993 issue of the A.R.S. Journal, Dick Brooks, our esteemed President no less, identified "*one beneficial side effect of the heat and drought here in the Northeast: bud-set is abundant and bodes well for an exuberant display next Spring. Perhaps plants, like people, need a little stress to bring out the best in them!*" On the same subject but from the reverse perspective, John Street in his seminal work "*Rhododendrons*", noted that cold, wet weather during June and July can cause the flower buds to grow through, that is, turn into new growth that may not mature sufficiently to induce a second flower bud.

The experts have spoken. The wet weather in the summer of 1993 provided conditions too good for the growing of rhododendrons. To appreciate all the new growth we will all have to mature into lovers of foliage. We will be able to feel superior to those who have big, gloopy yellow flowers because it can only have come about from having too much stress in the garden!

Rhododendron artwork reprinted with permission from Timber Press.