



FEBRUARY 1994

The Yak

A CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

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

Monday, February 14, 1994 Meeting 7:30 p.m.

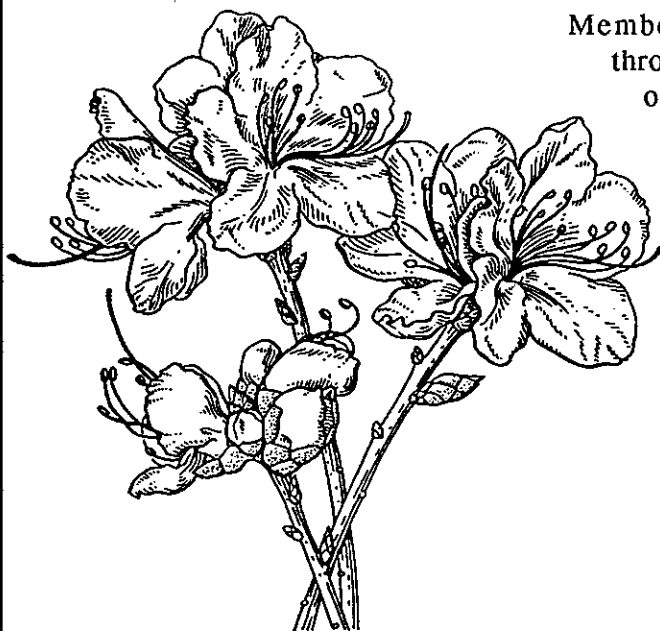
St. Andrews Anglican Hall
20955 Old Yale Road, Langley

PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF DATE AND TIME

We were asked by the Church to move our meeting from
Wednesday, February 16 to Monday, February 14 and start a little earlier
—so be sure to mark it on your calendar.

FRASER SOUTH'S ANNUAL AUCTION

Members —start your spring cleaning early—hunt
through your basement, attic, or garage and dust off
one or two treasures to donate to our auction.
Charlotte Chase will be our Auctioneer. You are
guaranteed to have a fun-filled evening. All
proceeds go to a worthy cause—our club.



EARLY BLOOMS SHOW AND TELL

As an added treat, early blooms will be presented
by Vern Finley and Arnim Roeske.

ASIAN GARDEN ASPIRATIONS

At our January Chapter Meeting Peter Wharton, Curator of the David C. Lam Asian Garden at UBC gave us an enthusiastic account of the development of the garden. When he was appointed in 1975, the area comprised bush and second growth forest. He decided to retain some of the open areas as grassed woodland glades and has since planted about 270 species.

His enthusiasm for rhododendrons was conveyed throughout the presentation. He would precede each slide by saying, "One of my great favourites..."

In addition to beautiful slides of species growing in the UBC Asian Garden Peter showed spectacular slides of Sichuan Province in China. He demonstrated why there is such a diversity of species in China with the variety of terrain and microclimates. He had stunning photographs of mountains and valleys with rhododendrons clinging to the precipitous slopes. He also described his plans for his trip to China in the fall where he will hunt for specimens of *R. coeloneurum*, *R. ochraceum* and *R. denudatum*. His objective for the UBC Asian Garden is to have 80% of the plants from wild sources.

A memorable evening. ❀

Reminder—1994 Membership Dues are now *Past Due*

Last call to renew your membership *and* be included on the 1994 Fraser South membership list, which will be issued with *The Yak* in March.

Dues: Full	\$33.00
Associate	\$10.00
Local	\$15.00

Memberships may be renewed at the February meeting or by sending a cheque to Arnim Roeske, 19459 Fifth Avenue, Surrey, B.C., V3S 5J9.

For more information call Arnim at 538-3881. ❀

Ways and Means Committee

At our January Executive Committee meeting, Diane Scott was appointed to head up our Ways and Means Committee. ❀

B.C. Council of Garden Clubs

Annual Conference: Saturday, March 19 at Dogwood Restaurant at the PNE. ❀

A great tip from Clint Smith

(Reprinted from the Victoria Chapter's September 1993 Newsletter)

Clint advised that chlorosis is common in rhodos up and down the coast from Prince Rupert to Morrow Bay in California because the region is deficient in magnesium.

Make a solution of Epsom's salts (magnesium sulphate) two tbsp. per gallon of water and include one tbsp. of iron chelate. Wet the root ball at two week intervals, three times when the new growth is forming. ❀

Fertilizer for Sale

Thanks to Les Clay, we have fertilizer available to members again this year. Orders taken at the February meeting. ❀

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16
CHAPTER MEETING

Guest Speaker: Alleyne Cook
"Magnolias and Other
Companion Plants for
Rhododendrons"

SATURDAY, APRIL 9
EARLY SHOW
VANCOUVER RHODODENDRON
SOCIETY

Van Dusen Gardens, Vancouver

SUNDAY, APRIL 10, 1-4 P.M.
(date changed from April 3)
FRASER SOUTH SPRING
PLANT SALE

Clay's Nursery
3666 - 224th Street, Langley

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20
CHAPTER MEETING

Guest Speaker: Lynn Watts
of The Greenery Bellevue
will give a presentation and
have plants for sale

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

Willowbrook Mall, Langley

TOURS

Your program committee has planned a number of exciting tours this spring.

DAVID C. LAM ASIAN GARDENS
SUNDAY, APRIL 17, 1:00 P.M.

A guided tour for Fraser South members with Mike Trembath and Don Martyn sharing their knowledge of rhododendron species.

HAMMOND'S ACRES OF RHODODENDRONS &
BLOEDEL RESERVE, BAINBRIDGE
ISLAND, WASHINGTON
SATURDAY, APRIL 23 - ALL DAY

Very few tours are allowed to the woodland gardens of the Bloedel Reserve of over 100 acres. Fraser South has been fortunate to obtain a reservation for a guided tour. On the way to Bainbridge Island we will stop at Dave Hammond's nursery and display garden near Arlington.

FRASER SOUTH MEMBERS' GARDENS

A new tour concept for Fraser South. Every Thursday evening from April 21 to May 26, 7:00 to dusk, one of our members' gardens will be open for drop-in visitors. Our gardens vary from some only recently started to collections of established plants. The objective will be to provide members with the opportunity to discuss successes and future plans, and to exchange information and ideas. Anyone interested in welcoming visitors on a Thursday evening please contact David Sellars at 535-0763.

SKAGIT VALLEY - R. MACROPHYLLUM

A tour to the Skagit Valley to view one of our native species in its natural habitat will be organized in June.

SPECIES OVERVIEW

"Though I know I am speaking to the already committed, or should I say infected, rhododendron enthusiasts bear with me a bit and let's start at the beginning.

If you came to this area from say the prairies or the eastern provinces where rhododendrons do not really feature in gardens, perhaps you were first impressed by a plant in a park or in a neighbour's garden. "What's *THAT*— the bush with the big bunches of pink flowers—some kind of lilac?" you ask. "Oh, that's a rhododendrum" says your knowledgeable companion. So when gardening fever is rising in the spring, you go to your local nursery and say, "I want a rhododendrum", the salesperson asks, "What kind?" and you say, "A pink one", and you go home with anything from 'Bow Bells' to 'Anna Rose Whitney', in anything from a 6-inch pot to a 5-gallon pot—and there you are... Perhaps you see the sign for the Rhodo Show, or see some of the truss displays put on by the outlying chapters of the Society, and the truth begins to dawn—that there are more than colour differences, and varietal names. Perhaps you ask an innocent question of one of the circling helpers—and their knowledge and enthusiasm overwhelms you.

Many of us came to be rhodie fans in some such way—first as admirers of the many and varied hybrids, and only later appreciating their origins. And why, you may ask, concern yourself with species? There is a purity, and clarity of characteristics in the species that is—perforce—blurred in hybrids. Not infrequently you see comments on hybrids—"no better than the species"—in other words, many of the species are worthy garden plants in their own right. As rhodie enthusiasts it is of interest to know the origins and backgrounds of our loves.

The collection of plants classed as rhododendrons species is very large and very varied—almost a plant for all seasons, all gardens and all tastes. From little fuzzy "hugglies" to majestic towering trees, from the shy and finicky to the bold and muscular, from the haughty and aristocratic to the brassy and riotous—indeed something for everyone. With all these to choose from, why bother with hybrids? I like to think that hybridists were (and are) aiming for specific results, and not just trying to impress their will upon nature: aiming to extend the blooming time, and colour range; to increase cold hardiness, or heat tolerance; to tailor habit to small city gardens; to improve flower texture and size; to build a race of plants with attractive foliage—pleasant garden inhabitants even when not in bloom; and to produce plants whose cultural requirements are less demanding than their parents. Doubtless there are other aims—but that's enough to be going on with.

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The classification of rhododendrons—at least the classification with which we are most familiar—was done largely on the examination of dried herbaceous material (I don't want to get into involved history here—I don't know enough) but it was an effort to organize the wealth of material coming in to Britain from the great plant collectors. It is my understanding that it was

meant to be a temporary one—to bring some kind of useable order to the material. Because the field is *SO* large, efforts to revise it have tended to be piecemeal and patchy. Recently several major revisions of classification have been undertaken and the result—to many of us non-experts who merely *grow* the darn things—has been confusion rather than clarification. So if I speak of Series as in the Balfourian system—it's because that's the way I know them.

This is a long preamble to what I started out to do—which was to list the major series, and note the characteristics for which they are known, and how these show in the plants we commonly grow. It was a good idea—and I started full of enthusiasm—but it didn't take long for me to see that I was being far too ambitious. So, walk around the garden with me and let's see what we have. The littlies—thanks mainly to the *lapponicum*s; plants with marvelously aromatic foliage—*anthopogons* and *saluenense* and *campylogynum* crosses: *wardii* crosses with clean foliage which, at certain times, may be quite remarkably blue—most of our best yellows owe much to *wardii*; *thomsonii* crosses, also with lovely clean foliage and heavy almost waxy texture to the campanulate blooms. Hybrids sporting *williamsianum* or *fortunei* blood may show coloured new growth almost as exciting as flowers. The many *yakushmanum* hybrids—neat and tidy in habit are often indumented. The big bristly reds of the *barbatum* series hybrids are showy in and out of bloom. How grateful we are for *griersonianum* producing so many good bright reds, untainted with blue ('though some people carp at the somewhat lax inflorescence and an unfortunate habit to straggle a bit, you can't beat the colour!). The hybrids that you

can safely put in full exposure—perhaps to act as shade and shelter for their less rugged siblings may owe much of the toughness to *ponticum* or *catawbiense*. There are early blooming *moupinense* or *dauricum* hybrids, and vigorous *calophytum* crosses. late blooming *discolor* crosses or even later big *auriculatum* crosses. We owe many of our orange-shaded hybrids to varying amounts of *dichroanthum* blood (and with it the tendency to sunburned foliage, and the nasty habit of fall blooming). Hybrids with the darkest red blooms seem to carry *meddianum* in their parentage. Scented blooms seem to come mainly from *decorum* or *fortunei* or even *discolor*. *Smirnowii*, used mainly to impart hardiness, adds frills to the florets and sometimes indumentum to the foliage. We must not forget the 'blues'—so many owing their colour to the *triflorum*s—*augustinii* and *oreotrephe*s, or the smaller blues to *russatum*, *intricatum* or *impeditum*. What fills your heart with greater pride than those patrician hybrids of the *cinnabarinum* series—gorgeous foliage, heavy textured blooms of superb colours.

The list can go on and on and you soon learn to recognize certain traits coming from certain species.

Mike Trembath

New Powdery Mildew Project

(from Dick Cavender, Director District 4)

There seems to be a new type of powdery mildew that is attacking broad-leaved evergreen Rhododendrons. There have been a couple of articles in the Journal (Vol. 43, No. 4, pp. 218 by Cox and Vol. 46, No. 2, pp. 90-91 by Gibson) on this subject.

Jay Tsheidt of the Oregon State University Tissue Lab is interested in receiving leaf samples of powdery mildew—but the samples must be collected *now*. This is the time of year when the fruiting bodies are present that make it possible to distinguish between the many species of fungus.

Jay is mainly interested in samples from broad-leaved rhodies but would also like samples from deciduous azaleas.

It might be a good idea to review the two Journals mentioned and then collect two or three leaves from infected plants. Place each collection in its own plastic bag. Label with name of plant, date and place of collection and any other information that may be pertinent, such as type of fungicide last used and date of application. Send samples with your name and address to:

Jay Tsheidt
Oregon State University
Department of Botany
Cordley Hall 1089
Corvallis, Or 97331-2903

Thanks for your help.☼

rootstalk

by Indumentum

In a recent article in the gardening section of the Vancouver Sun, David Tarrant gave some advice regarding moving rhododendrons. He recommended that all the flower buds be removed to stimulate root growth by allowing the plant to put all its energy into growing new roots. This is all very well, but at the rate Fraser South members move their rhododendrons around, if we followed this advice none of us would ever have any flowers in the spring! I would suggest this is only necessary if the size of the root ball has to be decreased in order to move the plant. If the plant can be moved with the root ball intact, it shouldn't be necessary to dis-bud the plant.

A bigger problem is plants that have become root-bound, either through staying too long in a pot or because the surrounding medium is not too friendly, for example if the soil is too sandy around the rootball.

A few years ago, Mike Trembath in the Fraser South newsletter, provided some sage advice from her wealth of experience, which I have been following successfully ever since. In addition to disbudding the plant, she recommended making several shallow vertical slashes in the root ball with a sharp knife. Prying some of the roots loose will encourage them to grow into the surrounding soil.

FRASER SOUTH RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

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