



MAY 1994

The Yak

A CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

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

Wednesday, May 18, 1994 Meeting

8:00 p.m.

St. Andrews Anglican Hall
20955 Old Yale Road, Langley

Members' Sale Night and Beer Bottle Truss Show



An opportunity to sell your plants to others and participate in the First Annual Fraser South Beer Bottle Truss Show. Bring your trusses in beer bottles to enter in various fun categories. Judging will be done by members using voting sheets.

The categories (one entry per category please!):

1. Pink
2. Red
3. White
4. Yellow
5. Most lurid
6. Most flaccid
7. Best last year's truss

April 20 Chapter Meeting

Lynn Watts provided us with a wonderful presentation on the indumented species. His photography was spectacular with three slides of each species showing the general foliage, a close-up of the flower and the new growth. Particularly memorable photographs included *R. metternichii*, *R. galactinum*, *R. wiltonii*, *R. balfourianum*, and *R. hodgsonii*. He also brought along a large number of plants for sale and desirable specimens such as *R. tsariense* x *R. yakushimanum* were quickly snapped up by members.☘

New Members

A warm welcome to D. Selman of Langley, Vicki and Michael Neyedli of Belcarra and Trev and Doreen Badminton of Aldergrove.☘

Finleys Featured in ARS Journal

What a delight to see a beautiful picture of Doc and Vern Finley's cross *R.*'Burnaby Centennial' on the cover of the Spring 1994 ARS Journal. The article on page 67 describes how the Finleys won the competition to select a new rhododendron to honour the centennial of the City of Burnaby. There's also a picture of a picture of their rhodo with the proud parents looking on. Congratulations!☘

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Fraser South Plant Sales

The plant sales at Les Clay's and Willowbrook Mall were a big success with lots of new faces eager to buy. Thanks to all who helped, particularly Diane Scott who organized the events and Hedy Dyck who did such a comprehensive job of publicity. The excellent coverage really paid off.☘

Spring Tours

Our Spring touring season was blessed with fine weather and early blooming. In fact, at one point it began to look as if the later tours might turn into deadheading parties. The David Lam Garden at UBC was a delight on April 17. A large number of species were in bloom and the foliage was admired on others. Mike Trembath was particularly taken with a large specimen of *R. longesquamatum*.

The Bainbridge Island and Hammond's Garden tour was spectacular. At the Bloedel Reserve we were provided with a very knowledgeable guide who took particular delight in showing us the waterfall canyon with huge rhodos growing up the sides and a specimen of 'Loderi King George' over 30 ft high that must be one of the largest in North America.

The tours of Fraser South members' gardens proved very popular and demonstrated the diversity of garden tastes from woodland gardens to rock terraces. For those who missed it, the tour to Mike Bale's garden on a rocky bluff overlooking the Fraser River was the highlight of the entire tour program. Mike has done an incredible job of developing a vision for his garden and the implementation is well underway. In 10 years time, the people of Bainbridge Island will be organizing spring coach tours to this masterpiece of rhododendron garden design.☘

SKAGIT VALLEY TOUR

Don Martyn is planning an outing to the Skagit Valley to view the *R. macrophyllum* in June—date to be decided. If you are interested in going give Don a call at 823-4853 before the end of May.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 15 CHAPTER MEETING

Fraser South's Annual Picnic at Williams Park (Williams Park is north of 232nd on Glover Road in Langley.)

The park will be available to us from 5:30 p.m. to dusk. As in the past, it's a potluck picnic with everyone bringing a favourite dish, their own plates, glasses and cutlery. The Phoning Committee will be contacting you in early June to see if you are coming.

The Yak will be back

Look for the next issue of *The Yak* at the beginning of September. Submissions are always welcome. Please forward them to Wendy Sellars by mail or office fax —583-5113 (be sure to address the fax to Wendy Sellars).☘

Harold Johnson Memorial Fund

As announced at our April meeting we received a donation from the Colemans "in fond remembrance of Harold Johnson, whose great enthusiasm for gardening and generous sharing of knowledge made not only our grounds brighter, but our lives as well."

At our April Executive Meeting we discussed setting up a Harold Johnson Memorial Fund. Please contact Norma Senn with your ideas on how we can honour Harold Johnson.☘

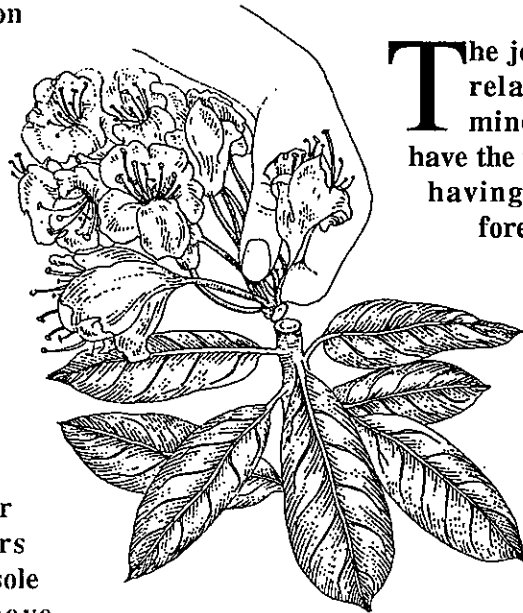
Deadheading Revisited

by Mike Trembath

I have lived with, collected, grown and looked at rhodies for some thirty years. More important than the resulting improvement in appearance, deadheading prevents seed production, and permits the more rapid development of axillary new growth buds.

The largesse with which seed is produced by rhododendrons seems to be a varietal pattern—i.e., some produce small, almost unapparent seed pods, others flaunt great capsules like mini-bananas. Although rhododendron seeds are small, the number of seeds per capsule, or even segment of a capsule, is staggering. When you consider that your average garden hybrid carries a truss on every terminal branch (you hope) of eight to 20 florets—each of which may develop a capsule containing millions of seeds; and when you consider that the production of viable seed is a prime directive for the plant kingdom, you begin to appreciate the demands made on the plant's nutritional system—demands which are more imperative than those for growth and new bud. Those varieties prone to set abundant seed show more marked changes—undeadheaded, the foliage produced is smaller, flower buds are absent or uncharacteristically small, and the branch may even die and be shed. Permitted to continue without deadheading, the entire plant loses vigor and may die. There are other factors involved, and seed production is not the sole cause of demise even in my above description—but plants stressed by heavy reproductive duties are ill equipped to withstand other stresses, such as competition or drought.

Individual branches of rhododendrons support a terminal whorl of leaves with a central bud. The bud may be a flower bud or a leaf bud. In the latter case spring growth causes the bud to grow—straight ahead as it were, the branch is lengthened and forms another terminal whorl of leaves and its central bud. If the central bud is a flower bud, growth of the branch occurs from the tiny axillary buds that lie at the junction of the leaf stalks and the main stem. When the spent flower is snapped off, one, or more, of these small buds will lengthen and grow and create the next branch (or branches) with their leaves and terminal buds. If the spent truss is *NOT* removed, development of the axillary buds is often delayed. Delayed new growth may fail to produce flower buds, or may be insufficiently ripe to withstand a hard winter.



The job of deadheading is relaxing in its sheer mindlessness. So if you have the time, and don't mind having the thumb and forefinger of your right hand glued together (I've yet to find a solvent) your plants will be stronger and healthier and will produce more flowers.

*This article is taken from a letter by Mike Trembath published in the May edition of Gardens West. The letter is in response to an article by Judy Newton where she commented that it wasn't necessary to deadhead rhododendrons.**

rootstalk

by Indumentum

Fraser South Rhododendron Society

Executive and Committees

President:	Norma Senn
Past President:	Don Martyn
Vice President:	Mike Trembath
Treasurer:	Larry Chase
Secretary:	Lillian Emerson
Directors:	John Anderson Mike Bale Arnim Roeske
Membership:	Arnim Roeske
Programs:	Les Clay and David Sellars
Library:	Pat Dahl
Newsletter:	Wendy and David Sellars
Publicity:	Hedy Dyck
Hospitality:	Phil Anderson
Ways and Means:	Diane Scott

Rhodoholics are, by definition, obsessed with rhododendrons. Trees are allowed in the garden only to the extent that they provide the perfect amount of shade for the beloved rhodos and as long as their root systems don't compete. A few other spring flowering shrubs are grudgingly permitted as long as the colour and leaf texture are consistent. Apart from a few oddballs such as *auriculatum* hybrids the flowering season for rhododendrons essentially ends at the end of May and with a sigh we can get back to our contented appreciation of foliage.

The flowering season could be extended, however, by planting shrub roses. Not the fussy hybrid teas that require pruning and spraying but real shrubs that can be largely left alone. The word 'rhododendron' is derived from the Greek *Rhodos* which means 'rose'. There are remarkable similarities between rhododendrons and shrub roses. Real roses only flower once a year, they like good drainage, they need deadheading, they keep getting bigger every year and some, particularly the antique French shrub roses have truly remarkable flowers. The main difference compared with rhododendrons, is that they can take as much sun as you can provide and the root systems are deep. The only thing you need to know about planting a shrub rose is to dig a hole big enough for a wheelbarrow load of compost.

A fine selection of shrub roses is available from Pickering Nurseries in Ontario. They will ship bare root in the fall or spring. Local nurseries have recently expanded their selection of shrub roses. *Rhodos* in June anyone?