

OCTOBER 1994



# The Yak

A CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

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

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 19, 1994 MEETING**  
8:00 P.M.

St. Andrews Anglican Hall  
20955 Old Yale Road, Langley

## **INTEGRATING RHODODENDRONS AND GARDEN DESIGN**

**GUEST SPEAKER: *RON RULE***

Ron Rule is one of Canada's well known garden designers and garden historians. His work has been written about in all national garden publications and was featured in the January/February 1994 issue of the U.S. magazine, *Garden Design*. He conducts a garden history course at the University of British Columbia and leads garden tours to Europe and the Pacific Northwest.

He is currently working on a two-acre woodland garden featuring rhododendrons.



### **New Members**

We are pleased to welcome two new members from Langley—Shirley McKendry and Al Bryce.

### **Thanks for the Goodies**

At our September meeting we had a wonderful selection of goodies, including organic grapes grown by Arnim Roeske. A special thanks to Melba Johnson and Lillian Emerson for looking after the kitchen.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### FALL SALE

VANCOUVER RHODODENDRON SOCIETY  
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 23, 1:00-4:00 P.M.  
Clay's Nursery, 3666 - 224th Street, Langley

### REFLECTIONS OF CANADIAN GARDENS BY DAVID TARRANT

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 26, 8:00 P.M.  
Kwantlen College, Langley Campus  
Auditorium, 20901 Langley Bypass  
No charge

### WHAT'S NEW FOR 1995 GARDENS BY BRIAN MINTER

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 8:00 P.M.  
Kwantlen College, Langley Campus  
Auditorium, 20901 Langley Bypass  
No charge

### CHRISTMAS PARTY—WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7

PLACE: TO BE ANNOUNCED

At our September meeting a vote was taken on where the Fraser South Christmas Party should be held—at a hall as a potluck affair or at a restaurant/banquet room catered with a fixed price menu (approximately \$20 per person). The majority of members chose the restaurant option. At the Executive Committee meeting on September 28, Charlotte Chase was nominated (by her husband, Larry) to look into possible facilities and report back at our October Executive Meeting. So look for more news in the November *Yak*.

## REMINDERS

### 1995 ARS MEMBERSHIP DUES

It's that time of year again—Membership Dues must be in to Arnim Roeske no later than November 15 in order to receive the ARS Winter 1995 Journal.

At the request of The American Rhododendron Society, Fraser South will not be offering local memberships this year. The options are a Full membership at \$35.00 per year, which includes the ARS Journal issued quarterly; or Associate membership—available to individuals who belong to another Chapter.

Bring your cheque book to the October meeting or mail your cheque and the 1995 Membership Renewal form (enclosed with this issue of *The Yak*) to Arnim.

### CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

There will be four positions open on the Fraser South Executive Committee for 1995—Treasurer, Vice-President, Secretary and Director (3-year term).

If you would like to nominate a member please contact Don Martyn, Chair of the Nominating Committee at 823-4853. Elections will be held at the January 1995 Chapter meeting.

## Help Wanted

We need a few extra pairs of hands to help out at our Chapter meetings. And the bonus is—it's a great way to meet fellow members.

Pat Dahl, our Librarian needs help to set up the library prior to the meeting, sign books out, and put the library away.

Pat was thinking of retiring from her position as Librarian this year, but we begged her to stay on and promised we would get her more help. *Anybody? Anybody?*

And then there is the meeting room which needs a jolly good tidy before we leave. It would be great if everyone would stack a few chairs and join in the clean up.

## Perennial Perennials

Randal Atkinson was our guest speaker at our September meeting and showed beautiful slides of shade loving perennials. The audience listened intently, asked numerous questions and were so captivated maybe we should change the name of the club to the Fraser South Shade Loving Perennial Society. Randal also had great tips for cultivation such as cutting down tall perennials, e.g., phlox paniculata, in early June to avoid legginess and mildew and to get more flowers!

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## Fund-raising

by Mike Bale

Most people have their own special reasons for joining a particular organization. The reasons for joining may vary widely according to the individual's particular personality, interests and activities. I suspect, however, that most people choose to join the ARS for two main reasons:

1. to increase their knowledge and familiarity with rhododendrons and related plants by learning from the experience and wisdom of established experts in the field; and
2. as a source of advice for the purchase of interesting and unusual plants at an affordable price.

Every Executive Committee must concern themselves with the goals and objectives of their chapter but despite this, perhaps the single most important time-consuming issue that the Executive must face each year is the question of funding. The Fraser South Chapter requires approximately \$4,000 to \$5,000 per annum to meet the ongoing expenses, such as hall rental, postage and newsletter, contributions towards the cost of hosting interesting speakers, promotional material. In addition, the chapter tries to make a contribution towards a number of worthy causes related to our interest in rhododendrons such as the upcoming expedition by Peter Wharton to China and also to the UBC student program. These expenses are over

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and above the ARS membership dues, most of which goes to the national organization in order to meet the cost of administration and the extremely fine journal which is received four times a year.

The major sources of income during the past few years for Fraser South has been from the proceeds derived from plant sales and from such activities as raffles and auctions. The success of these functions is solely dependent on the generous donation of time and effort by a number of members.

An idea recently suggested at our Executive Committee meeting was that every member of the chapter be encouraged to grow on a certain number of young plants in 2 1/2" liners (plugs) and nurture and repot these plants into one gallon containers over the succeeding year. During the following season each member would then be expected to contribute these plants to the Chapter for sale at one or more of the various plant sales. These plants could also be made available to the membership at any time during the year at a very affordable price.

The Chapter would make available to each individual member the 2 1/2" liner plants and would provide advice with respect to the growing on of the plants and also make available repotting medium if required. This programme would be repeated each year and provide an ongoing source of plant material for sale. At the end of each year, any plants which have remained unsold could be set aside and repotted again in two and three gallon containers thereby increasing the potential equity for the Chapter and the possibility of further income. This same format could be used for the distribution of seedlings, companion plants and grafted plants.

This concept might be of particular interest to those members who are keen hybridizers as it would provide a much more efficient opportunity for the distribution and assessment of plants with benefits accruing to the hybridizer, the individual member and the Chapter's bank account.

The scheme could, theoretically, provide a tremendous source of income, and in addition, provide a great opportunity to foster interaction between members. It would also result in an opportunity for new members to become involved in the activities of the Chapter immediately on joining. Every member would become a participant in fund-raising and in the process, involve themselves in the propagation and nurturing of rhododendrons.

The more knowledgeable and experienced members would be available to advise the less experienced individuals on any problems that they might incur.

Novice members would be encouraged to grow on plants which generally could be expected to grow without too much difficulty while the more experienced individuals could be encouraged to propagate plants which might require a little more effort and skill.

Another idea under consideration involves the sale of tickets for garden visits. This idea has been used by the Fraser Valley University Women's Club and Fraser Valley Rhododendron Chapter to raise funds. For example, by selling 200 tickets at \$8.00 each, a sum of \$1,600 would be raised for the Chapter's expenses.

Several members of Fraser South have already indicated their willingness to act as host gardens. We anticipate we would need to recruit eight or ten host gardens in order to make the project attractive. The success of this venture would depend entirely on the sale of tickets by the membership.

Tours to interesting rhododendron gardens may also help to introduce more people to Fraser South Rhododendron Society.

# *R. propagation*

## *x R. bishop*

About this time last year I began thinking about taking a few cuttings. Nothing too ambitious, maybe a couple of flats or so...

Although I'd had some success previously with fuschias and geraniums (in a glass of water!) I realized that rhododendrons would require more encouragement to develop roots. While flipping through some of the old ARS Journals in the club library I came across a collection of articles in the Spring 1985 issue in which members outlined a number of methods for handling rhodo cuttings.

I slapped together a plywood box 2' x 5' and 6" deep, flung an electric heating cable inside and dumped a few buckets of sand over top. Plastic flats were filled with a peat/perlite mix and fitted with clear plastic domes for humidity. All that was missing was the plant tissue!

In Cox's Guide to Choosing Rhododendrons he suggests that the trifloras and cinnabarina are relatively easily rooted. It will come as no surprise that some of the most sought-after species are quite difficult to root.

A quick tour of our own garden showed that those plants worthy of propagation were too small for cuttings. Indeed, many were still in one-gallon pots. The search for cutting material took me far afield but proved most fruitful with thirteen species represented: six trifloras, two cinnabarina, three from the pontica subsection, one from fortunea and one from campylocarpa.

The cuttings were washed, clipped, stripped, dipped and finally struck. By now a second and third propagator box had been built (deemed necessary to increase the odds of success). To my amazement, 100% of some varieties rooted. Others rotted. Some flowered, then rotted. Some grew fine new leaves that soon wilted because no roots had formed. Some tried my patience when their roots

broke off while being transplanted! Rooting results are summarized in the table below.

My cuttings were taken quite late in the season. Most were taken in mid-November after temperatures had dipped below freezing for a few nights. Good success was had with cuttings taken as late as February 14 (*R. makinoi*).

<i>Subsection</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>Average</i>
cinnabarina	100%	100%	100%
triflora	100	13	51
pontica	100	0	57
campylocarpa			67
fortunea			0
overall	100	0	55%

While collecting cutting material I couldn't resist gathering a few seed pods and as I read my Journal waiting for the pods to split I noticed an article announcing the Seed Exchange... By late March tiny green specks appeared all over the surface of our peat/perlite mix and we've been transplanting ever since.

We now have several hundred seedlings and rooted cuttings under plastic representing 35 different species. Most are in 4" pots. I haven't yet figured out where to put them when they graduate to the one-gallon size next spring, but I expect a number of the larger ones will find their way into the plant sale next May.

And you know what? I'm thinking of taking a few cuttings this fall...

*Robert Bishop is a member of Peace Arch Chapter and an associate member of Fraser South.*

## Cuttings Wish List

As mentioned in the September issue of *The Yak*, here is the MOST WANTED list of cuttings by members. Please call Wendy Sellars at 535-0763 if you can provide cuttings of:

SPECIES	FORM
<i>aberconwayii</i>	'His Lordship'
<i>adenopodum</i>	
<i>annae</i>	
<i>arboreum</i>	
<i>argyrophyllum</i>	'Chinese Silver'
<i>bainbridgeanum</i>	
<i>basilicum</i>	
<i>coryanum</i>	
<i>crinigerum</i>	
<i>eximium</i>	
<i>fargesii</i>	
<i>formosanum</i>	
<i>fulgens</i>	
<i>glischroides</i>	
<i>insigne</i>	'Exbury'
<i>lanigerum</i>	
<i>longesquamatum</i>	
<i>maculiferum</i>	
<i>neriiflorum</i>	'Rosevallon'
<i>oreodoxa</i>	
<i>pseudochrysanthum</i>	'Sunningdale'
<i>pseudochrysanthum</i>	'Ben Nelson'
<i>rude</i>	
<i>strigillosum</i>	'Exbury'

### HYBRIDS

Alpine Glow	Alpine Rose
Albatross	Avalanche
China	Dragonfly
Inamorata	Janet
Leonore	Puget Sound
Pilgrim	Repose
White Pearl	

# rootstalk

by Indumentum

The Head Gardener and I toured the great rhododendron gardens of southern England in late May. Leonardslee was a magnificent tangle of huge Loderis, Wakehurst Place still had some plants after the great wind storm of 1987 and High Beeches was a dappled woodland delight. The one garden that called us back time and again, however was not one of the famous old Victorian gardens. Valley Gardens in Windsor Great Park did not exist prior to the Second World War but has the ideal setting for a 400 acre rhododendron garden. A series of valleys slope down to Virginia Water divided by sandy ridges with stands of oak, Scots pine, beech and sweet chestnut trees. Valley Gardens contains the British National Species Collection, building on the plants collected by J.B. Stevenson from 1900 to 1951 at Tower Court, Ascot and featured in Bill Herbst's presentation to Fraser South last year. This collection is said to be "the greatest cultivated planting of wild rhododendrons in the world". By late May, of course, most of the species had finished flowering and were well into their new growth which was absolutely stunning. So many plants had such beautiful foliage the sight must have been superior to the flowering season. We decided credit was due to the cultural practices at Valley Gardens, in particular the application of fresh leaf mould mulch and systematic deadheading of even the largest plants. No other garden we visited was so well cared for. Beautiful foliage plants we saw included *R. basilicum*, *R. hodgsonii*, *R. pachysanthum*, *R. campanulatum*, *R. clematinae*, and *R. bureavii*. The other amazing thing about Valley Gardens is that admission is free!