

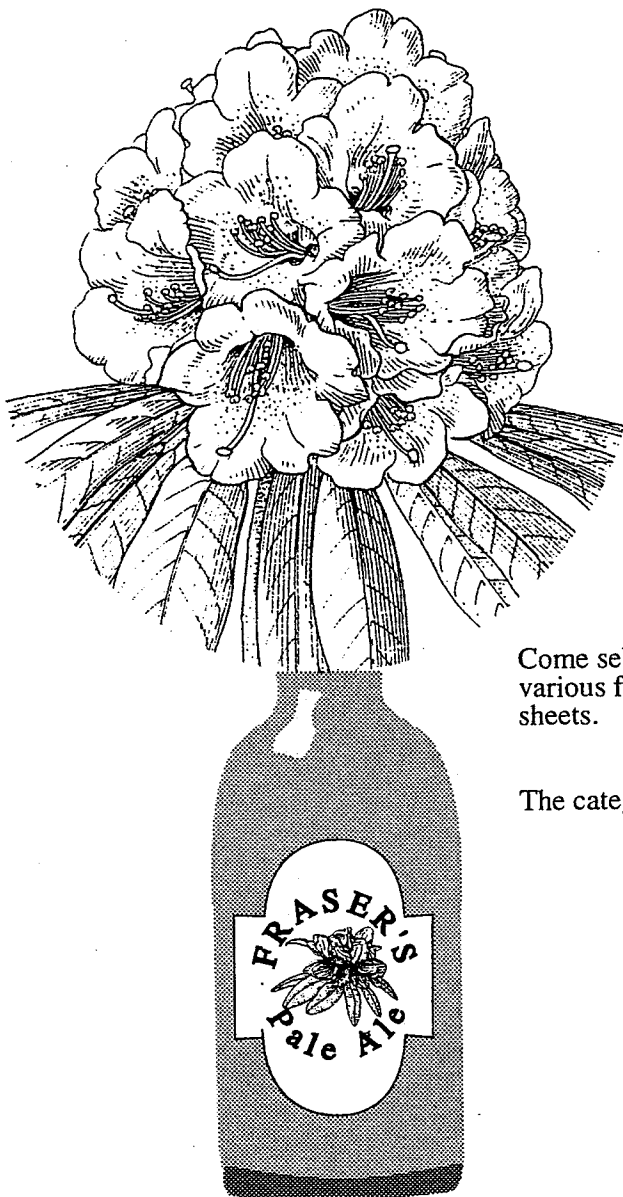


MAY 1995

# The Yak

A CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

FRASER SOUTH RHODODENDRON SOCIETY  
NEWSLETTER EDITOR  
16877 - 30A Avenue  
South Surrey, British Columbia  
V4B 5E7, Canada  
Telephone: 604 • 535-0763



**WEDNESDAY, MAY 17, 1995 MEETING**

**8:00 P.M.**

**St. Andrews Anglican Hall  
20955 Old Yale Road, Langley**

**Members' Sale Night  
&  
Second Annual  
Fraser South Beer Bottle Truss Show**

Come sell your plants and bring your trusses in beer bottles to enter in various fun categories. Judging will be done by members using voting sheets.

The categories are: (one entry per category please!)

1. Best Pink
2. Best Red
3. Best White
4. Best Yellow
5. Best Blue/Purple
6. Best Multicolour
7. Most Lurid
8. Most Flaccid
9. Best Last Year's Truss
10. Most Elegantly Weevil-Notched

## How to be a Winner at the May 17th Fraser South Beer Bottle Truss Show

### Tips for Beginners:

Some of our truss show experts have provided a few tips for those entering their first beer bottle truss show:

- drink the beer first. Some experts get good results leaving a half inch of beer and then adding water.
- in the 'most flaccid' category do not use a truss of *R. rigidum*.
- a rhodo like 'Gomer Waterer' does not work for the 'most lurid' category. Try something like 'China Doll', 'Frisled Petticoats' or 'Ooh La La'.

*Good luck to all!*

### New Members

We are pleased to welcome Ray and Jocelyn Hanson of Surrey, Gilbert and Natalie Tribe, John Fitzgerald and Charles Ulch of Langley.

### Get Well Wishes

Harry Huffman had open heart surgery and a bypass recently. Kay reports that Harry is at home now and that she is taking good care of him. We wish you a speedy recovery Harry and we look forward to seeing you both at the meetings again.

### Thank you from all of us

Melba Johnson and her assistants deserve a big *thank you* for organizing the coffee, tea and treats at each meeting. *And* thanks to those who bring the treats which are always greatly appreciated.

Thanks as well to Les Clay, Vern and Gord Finley and everyone else who donates plants for the raffle table.

### The Yak will be back

*The Yak* will return in early September at which time the official results of the Second Annual Fraser South Beer Bottle Truss Show will be published.

Interested in submitting an article to *The Yak*?  
—contact Wendy Sellars at 535-0763.

### From the Library

Pat Dahl (our librarian) reminds members who have books out on loan to return them at the May meeting. Books may be borrowed for the summer as long as they are signed out at the May meeting.

### Indumentum confesses

The Editor understands there was some confusion last month over the first publication of the poem 'The Rhodoholic'. Some readers may have noticed it was the *April 1* edition. The real author was our very own Indumentum, who wrote it with the aid of a small rhododendron glossary and a large Canada Council grant...

## Coming Events

### Members Garden Tours 7:00 p.m. to dusk

Only two tours left:

#### Thursday, May 11

Arnim and Mary Roeske  
19459 - 5 Avenue, South Surrey  
Take 8 Ave. to 192 St., head south and turn left on 3A Ave., turn left at 194 St. and right on 5 Ave.

#### Thursday, May 18

Pat and Dennis Dahl  
2054 - 216 Street, Langley

### Wednesday, June 21

#### Fraser South Picnic Williams Park, Langley

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

*See map attached for directions to Williams Park.*

## The Riverview Lands Western Canada's First Botanical Garden

The Riverview Horticultural Centre Society has just published a new book (in the Fraser South Library already, thanks Pat) on the Riverview Lands. This book describes the history of the development of western Canada's first botanical garden which was started in 1911. The garden is noted for its specimen trees which cannot be seen in such mature form anywhere else in Canada. The trees are described in great detail and a map of numbered trees is provided.

Guided walks of the Riverview Lands are available and the next walk is on May 13 at 10:00 a.m.

## Treasures from Guizhou

At our April chapter meeting Peter Wharton gave us a fascinating account of his trip to the province of Guizhou, China. Numerous rhododendron treasures were beautifully photographed in spectacular settings such as limestone gorges, pinnacles and huge boulder fields. Some rare specimens were photographed on inaccessible rock ledges waiting for the next generation of explorers to collect seed.

Many of the rhododendrons and other unusual trees and shrubs were loaded with seed pods. Peter kindly distributed seed to many chapter members who were delighted to see photographs of their future treasures growing in the wild.

## Great Garden Tours

We have had some wonderful garden tours this year. Fred and Anne Banford's garden looked as if someone had turned on coloured lights as the woodland setting was lit up by numerous large rhododendron species and hybrids. Mike Trembath's garden was enjoyed by a large crowd who oohed and aahed at the monstrous Loderis and beautiful 'Queen of Hearts'. At Evelyn and Allan Morton's, we enjoyed a wonderfully mature garden and appreciated meeting Evelyn and Allan.

The trip to the North Shore gardens provided us with another dimension to rhododendron gardening—the vertical. Trees, rocks, waterfalls and steep slopes were the defining characteristics. Margaret Charlton's garden was a feast of rare and unusual plants. Glen Patterson's was a beautifully landscaped rock/alpine/rhododendron garden overlooking the sea. In Lion's Bay, Joe Ronsley's and Richard Mossakowski's mountainside gardens had to be seen to be believed. A beautiful sunny day was enjoyed by all.

The Gardens of Victoria tour was a full day. It started off with a relaxing two hours at the amazing garden of the Weesjes—one member got lost among the species! Extra stops at Elk Lake Garden Centre and Norman Todd's Firwood Nursery loaded us down with purchases. Dave Dougan's garden (featured in the Summer 1993 edition of the ARS Journal) was stunning and Alf and Shirley Smith's rock garden is said to be the finest rock/alpine garden in North America—a beautiful setting on the side of Mt. Douglas with native Garry Oaks, native rocks, rare alpines and lovely rhododendrons.

## Rethinking Sun Tolerance by Merle Sanders

*(The following article is reprinted from the Eugene Chapter Newsletter, September 1994 edition)*

I consider nine to five to be full sun because that is the most sun that I can get in my garden. I was very interested to see what plants did take full sun after I cut down four oak trees.

All the information I can find indicates that *R. auriculatum*, 'September Song', 'Frank Galsworthy', 'Swamp Beauty', 'Ivory Ruffles' and 'Exbury Calstocker' all need some afternoon shade. Since I cut down those oak trees in February, there has been no afternoon shade. And, as you remember, the last part of June had four days in a row of 100° or more weather. The plants mentioned above did not burn a leaf or turn yellow (except those about to fall anyway). Even 'Tweety Bird' had full sun from nine until two-thirty. One leaf scorched because I didn't have enough water on it, but the rest have very dark green leaves.

A gentleman who bought several rhodies from me last year has full sun. I mean from sunup to sundown plus a southern slope. One of the plants was 'President Roosevelt'. In his shadeless yard the leaves stayed very dark green and variegated. Another customer claims that his 'President Roosevelt' has been in full sun for four or five years and has never had a scorched leaf. (I've not seen the plant.)

How can this be? After thinking on the subject for some time now, I have come to the conclusion that most rhodies will take full sun if they are planted so that they are well drained and get plenty of water. Why I say this is because the first rhodies I planted were in poor draining clay soil. If I watered them sparingly, even if they were sun tolerant, they had burned and scorched leaves. The next year I watered them well and some died from overwatering in the poorly draining soil. That is

why I now put plenty of cedar bark in the soil when I plant them. If they get enough water they don't burn and I have no problem with the roots rotting. The few exceptions I found in my garden are 'Shamrock', which turns yellow if planted in quite a lot of sun, let alone full sun. 'Celebrity' will burn its leaves if planted in too much sun, at least in my garden.

Another rhody that completely surprised me is *R. sinogrande*. I cut down several trees which were shading them. They now get sun from ten-thirty until five with a few breaks in between. The one that was well planted had no burned leaves, while the other two had sunburned leaves. Once again, the one with lots of bark in the soil did best.

There is nothing scientific about this information, but I truly believe that the way a plant is planted and cared for will make the difference whether it will take full sun or not, with a few exceptions.

### Fraser South Rhododendron Society

#### Executive and Committees

President:	Norma Senn
Past President:	Don Martyn
Vice President:	David Sellars
Treasurer:	John Warner
Secretary:	Janet Warner
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

# rootstalk

by Indumentum

Water is a basic requirement for life on Earth and a basic requirement for the rhododendron garden. In the Fraser Valley we have too much rain in the winter which leaches the nutrients out of the soil and too little rain in the summer when the rhodos need plenty of water for the new growth. A consequence of our rainfall being out of sync is that we have to provide supplementary fertilizer and supplementary irrigation. In the natural habitat of rhododendrons in Asia, conditions are very favourable as one would expect and most of the rainfall occurs during the high growth period. The only species rhododendron common to coastal B.C. is *R. macrophyllum* which is, by necessity, very drought resistant.

Early civilizations were based on access to water and conveyance of water to farms and gardens. Our standard of living today is such that we take our telephones, toasters, televisions and trips to Tahiti for granted. It is curious, therefore, that there seems to be a movement afoot to make us feel guilty about watering our gardens. It is not politically correct to sprinkle spasmodically and it soon may be frowned on to sprinkle at all. Xeriscaping (planting gravel and cactus) is 'in' and lush green growth is 'out'.

I take great exception to being told that my great interest in rhododendron growing should be compromised by regulation. Meanwhile conspicuous consumption is everywhere and non-renewable resources continue to be consumed. Restricting water supply is a fundamental step backwards in the process of civilization. Heat, light, shelter and water supply are basic necessities that should come before luxury items.

It is not well understood that we are not short of water but we are short of cheap water. There is ample flow in the North Shore rivers for our expanding population. Larger dams are required to provide sufficient storage over the dry summer months. The problems of water supply in the Fraser Valley are similar to the problems of growing rhododendrons. Plenty of rain in the winter and not enough in the summer means that to maintain your standard of living you have to spend some money on a water supply system. It's really quite simple. The next thing you know is that we'll be asked to disconnect our drains. Funnily enough this is already happening in Vancouver. Even the Romans had drains.