



OCTOBER 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, OCTOBER 18, 1995 MEETING**

**8:00 P.M.**

St. Andrews Anglican Hall  
20955 Old Yale Road, Langley

**GUEST SPEAKER: DES KENNEDY**

Author of

***CRAZY ABOUT GARDENING***

A former monk, teacher and social worker, Des Kennedy has spent the last fifteen years as a professional writer, working from his home on Denman Island. He is an award-winning journalist and regular contributor to The Globe and Mail. He has written many articles on gardening, environmental issues and rural living.

Tickets for this special event will be sold at the door for \$5.00 per person. This includes a chance at some very special door prizes—so save your ticket!

**Rhodo Planting at Williams Park**  
**—October 21, 1995 at 10:00 a.m.**

Everyone is welcome to come and help make a rhodo bed around the bench we placed last June at Williams Park in memory of Harold Johnson. We have the rhodos we just need the gardeners! For more info call Diane Scott at 533-4378.

**Christmas Party**  
**—Friday, December 15**

Our December meeting will be a potluck dinner at the St. Andrews Anglican Hall on *Friday, December 15*. Diane Scott will be coordinating the event.

## New Member

A warm welcome to Julie Garland of Langley.

## Greer's Botany 101

Judging by the tremendous turnout at the September 20 meeting, few Fraser South members missed Harold Greer's "Botany 101" class. Starting with the algae, fungi and mosses, Harold took us on a tour through the major divisions of the plant kingdom ending up (surprise, surprise) with the genus rhododendron. Harold dazzled us with his photographic skill as three projectors simultaneously filled the room with images of rhododendrons and their relatives. Some of the close-up shots of the leaves of scaly rhododendrons (lepidotes) were truly amazing. Harold clarified why azaleas are azaleas and dwarf rhododendrons are not. It was also interesting to learn that several of the closest rhododendron relatives are native to the Pacific coast of North America. But most of all, we learned why Harold Greer is such a popular speaker.

—Robert Bishop

## ARS Membership Dues

Membership Dues time again! This year we are offering three types—Full Membership \$35.00 (includes the ARS Journal issued quarterly); Local Membership \$20.00 (does not include the ARS Journal), and Associate Membership \$10.00 (available to those who belong to other Chapters).

Enclosed is the 1996 Membership Form which is to be completed and forwarded along with your cheque to Arnim Roeske.

*Remember*—November 15 is the deadline in order to receive the ARS Winter 1996 Journal.

## Call for Nominations

At our January meeting we will be electing new Officers for President, Librarian, Membership Chairperson, and Director. If you would like to volunteer or nominate someone contact Don Martyn at 823-4853.

## THE RHODOHOLICS CREED

1. *I want it.*
2. *I want it all.*
3. *I want it now.*
4. *If it will not grow in my zone or is prohibitively expensive, I want it most of all.*
5. *If everyone else has it, I must have it too.*
6. *If I planted everything that I have already purchased, I must immediately buy more rhododendrons.*
7. *Any money saved by virtue of comparison shopping equals found money and therefore it is not counted as spending.*
8. *I am perfectly willing to forego any necessities of life such as food for my children in order to have it.*
9. *I recognize my rhododendron dependency.*
10. *I recognize your rhododendron dependency.*
11. *I will willingly aid and abet your dependency as you will mine.*
12. *This makes us infinitely happy.*

*(At this point it is customary to recite your Visa number from memory.)*

*(Reprinted with thanks from the Eugene Chapter Newsletter, October 1995)*

# BULBS BEAUTIFUL

Most gardeners give the name "bulb" to a whole group of plants that grow from bulbous underground parts. Botanically speaking, some of them are also corms, tubers and rhizomes. A true bulb is not a seed but a flower or plant in miniature, an embryo surrounded by scales that hold all its nourishment. Sometimes next year's plant is inside a tight layer of food-packed material, as in a tulip bulb, a daffodil or an onion. Some bulbs, like lilies, are scaly and looser. A hyacinth bulb is like a single big bud.

A crocus or gladiolus starts from a corm. That is a solid mass of storage tissue with several growing tips on the top. Roots grow out from around the edge of the flat, plate-like bottom. The plate shrivels over the summer and new corms emerge on top, with little ones called cormels forming at the edges.

A tuber consists of another solid mass of storage tissue, but minus the base plate. Both shoots and roots erupt from eyes, or growing points around it. If you plant an old potato tuber, for example, it shrinks and disintegrates, then new tubers form on the roots of the new plant that comes up. Dahlias do the same thing and so do tuberous begonias. Perennials that grow this way are generally called tuberous-rooted.

Rhizomes are found in irises, cannas and many others. It is a thickened underground stem. That is why rhizomes of iris, for instance, are planted horizontally, with some of the stem remaining above ground. Also, a storage-tissue with eyes, a rhizome's roots grow from the lower surface, while flower stalks and leaves come from the upper stem side.

No matter what you call them, now is the time to plan and act. Keep in mind that the hardy bulbs—those that push impatiently through melting snow and thawing earth to start a new season—need about two months

of low-temperatures (about 40° F.) for their roots to grow and buds to develop. You can plant them any time from mid-September to November (or even later as long as the ground is not frozen solid). Bulbs make a good investment. They are practically foolproof, they are permanent, have few needs and when you want more plants, dig some up and divide them.

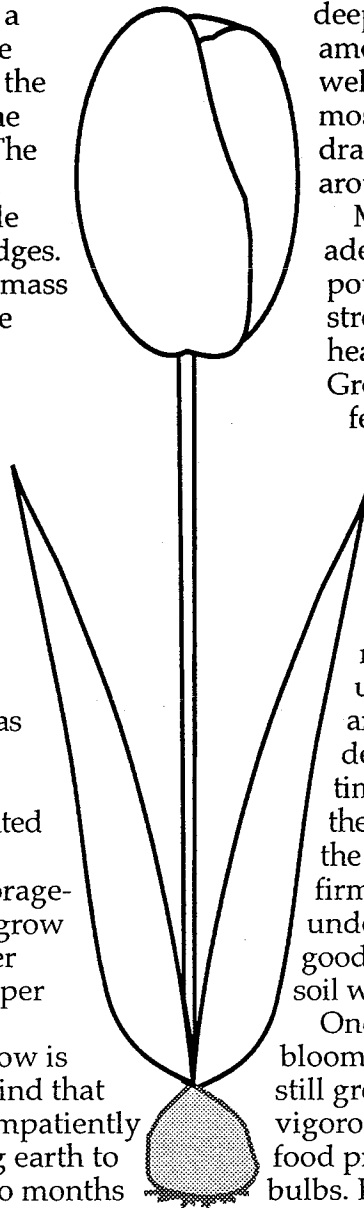
Good drainage is a "must" for bulbs. They will take almost any kind of soil other than sticky clay and they will do with less food or sun than most plants. Improve soil by deep-digging, working in generous amounts of organic matter—compost, well-rotted manures, leaf mold or peat moss and sand to overcome sluggish drainage. Don't add fresh manure around bulbs at planting time.

More than other plants, bulbs need adequate amounts of phosphorus and potash to develop bright flowers with strong stems, and to mature firm heavy bulbs for the next season.

Ground bonemeal makes an excellent fertilizer because it releases a good share of phosphate and a small amount of nitrogen slowly.

To set out bulbs, use a trowel, first forking the soil well below the planting depth. Bulbs are planted right side up. Look for the small roots at the base of the bulb. The upper part is usually more pointed and forms a kind of neck. As for how deep to plant, an old rule says three times the height of the bulb. Measure the depth from the top of the bulb, not the bottom of the hole. Gently tamp to firm the soil so as to avoid air space under bulbs and make sure there is good contact between each bulb and the soil which encourages early rooting.

Once the spring flowering bulbs finish blooming never cut off foliage while it is still green and actively growing. Healthy vigorous leaves are necessary for ample food production and development of the bulbs. Removing these leaves too early



stops bulb growth and may keep them from flowering next season. Allow foliage to remain until it naturally begins to yellow and die, when it may be removed without any harm. Flower stems should be removed promptly after bloom is finished to prevent seed formation which can take stored food away from the bulbs and reduce flowering next spring.

(Reprinted with thanks from The B.C. Council of Garden Clubs Bulletin, September/October 1995)

## 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

# Footstalk

by Indumentum

In September, I stopped by the Valley Gardens in Windsor Great Park to check out the British National Collection of Rhododendron Species. On the north side of High Flyer's Hill the large leaved species were magnificent with huge specimens of *R. basilicum*, *hodgsonii*, *arizelum*, and *falconeri*. On the east and south sides, however, many rhododendrons were suffering as a result of the summer drought of 1995. The loss of some shade trees during the great wind storms of October 1987 and January 1990 has not helped. A number of plants in the Taliense section were lacking shade and they had shrivelled, brown leaves despite excellent leaf mould mulch. Monthly rainfall at my parent's home in Bracknell (less than 10 km from Valley Gardens) was:

April	24.1 mm
May	27.2 mm
June	7.6 mm
July	19.1 mm
August	3.8 mm

The low rainfall in June, in particular, must have been deadly when the sun was at its hottest. The soil at Valley Gardens is very sandy and there is no permanent watering system. Movable systems are set up pumping water from Virginia Water Lake but clearly this had been inadequate.

From the Species Collection, I wandered through the valleys and over the ridges towards the famous Punch Bowl. I came across many huge hybrids and occasional species including a large specimen of *R. sinogrande*, that as demonstrated by the seed pods, must have flowered quite profusely last spring. Suddenly, through the trees and among many other large plants, I caught sight of a magnificent rhododendron, about twenty feet high with a symmetrical domed shape and glossy green leaves. It was *R. hodgsonii*, 'Poet's Lawn' a form I have not seen available locally. The network of paths, valleys and ridges in Valley Gardens is so complex, I am not sure I would be able to find it again.