

The Yak

FRASER SOUTH RHODODENDRON SOCIETY

A Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society

October 1996

In The Garden



All gardening
is landscape painting.
Alexander Pope



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Wednesday, October 16, 1996

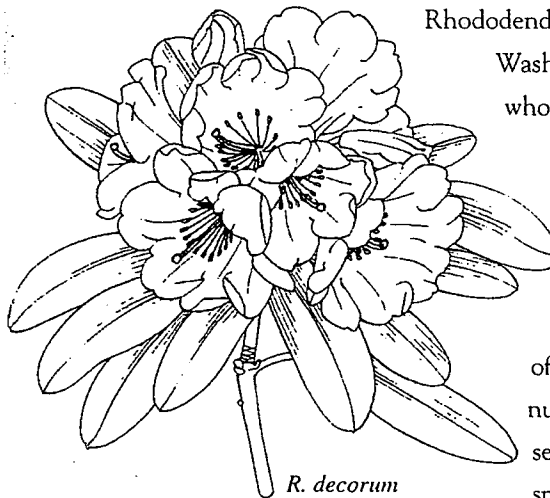
8:00 PM

St. Andrews Anglican Hall
20955 Old Yale Road, Langley

Speaker: Dave Hammond

'Development of My Garden and Nursery'

Dave Hammond has been developing "Hammond's Acres of Rhododendrons" since 1976 near Arlington, Washington. He has a retail and wholesale operation and ships all over the United States.



R. decorum

Many of us will recall our memorable tour of his garden and nursery in April 1994. Dave will show slides of the stages of development of his garden and nursery. We are looking forward to seeing photos of many of his spectacular, unusual rhododendrons.

YAKALENDAR

*OCTOBER 17, 7:45 PM
 Vancouver Rhododendron Society
 VanDusen Gardens, Floral Hall
 Guest Speaker: Douglas Harris,
 Managing Director of Exbury
 'From the Himalayas to Hampshire:
 Exbury'

*OCTOBER 26 AND 27
 10:00 AM-4:00 PM
 The B.C. Floral Art Society
 'Christmas Greetings'
 Auditorium-Oakridge Mall
 41st Avenue and Cambie
 Vancouver
 Display of Floral Designs, Sale of
 Crafts and Dried Materials, Free
 Demonstrations, Admission: \$3.00

*NOVEMBER 20
 Fraser South Chapter Meeting
 Guest Speaker: Susan Murray
 'Gardens of Southern England'

*DECEMBER 18
 Fraser South Chapter Meeting
 Christmas Party-Potluck Dinner
 at St. Andrews Anglican Hall.
 Further details in the November
 issue of *The Yak*

*JANUARY 15
 Fraser South Chapter Meeting
 Annual General Meeting and
 Speaker: David Sellars
 'Construction of a Pond and Stream
 for a Rhododendron Garden'

Lecture Series

The B.C. Horticultural Centre and
 Kwantlen University College are
 hosting the following lectures, from
 8:00 to 9:30 PM:

MONDAY, OCTOBER 21

'A Kaleidoscope of Ornamental
 Vines for Your Garden'
 Speaker: Bruce MacDonald
 Director, UBC Botanical Gardens

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18

'What's Bugging You? Controlling
 Pests in the Landscape'
 Speaker: James Matteoni
 Coordinator, Greenhouse
 Management

Monday, January 20

'Pruning Horrors'
 Speaker: Cass Turnbull
 Founder of Plant Amnesty, Seattle

Monday, February 17

'The Glorious Gardens of Bonny
 Scotland'
 Speaker: Norma Senn
 Director, Agriculture, University
 College of the Fraser Valley

Admission is \$4.00 (pay at the
 door). Proceeds to the Student
 Scholarship Fund. The lectures will
 be held at Kwantlen University
 College, 20901 Langley By-Pass,
 Glover Road Entrance, Langley.

ARS Membership Dues

Membership Dues time...

Renewal deadline: November 15 in
 order to receive the ARS Winter
 1997 Journal.

Fraser South is offering three types
 of memberships:

- Full \$35.00
 (includes the ARS Journal issued
 quarterly and *The Yak* newsletter)
- Local \$20.00
 (includes *The Yak* but not the ARS
 Journal)
- Associate \$10.00
 (available to those who belong to
 other ARS Chapters, includes
The Yak)

The 1997 Membership form is
 enclosed. Please complete and
 forward it along with your cheque to
 Vicki Neyedli at the address on the
 form.



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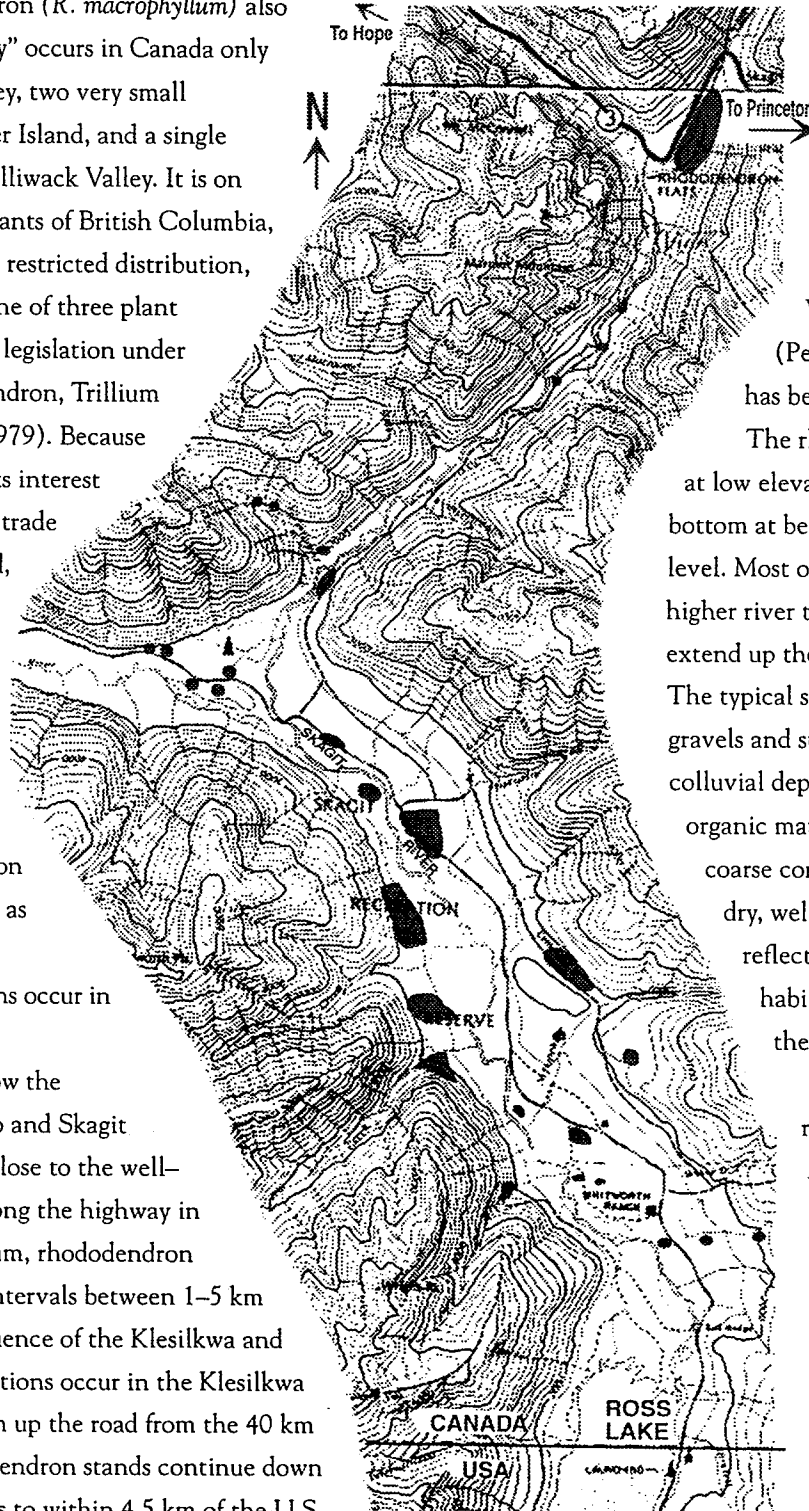
Pacific Rhododendron in the Skagit Valley

compiled from two articles and maps—authors unknown

Pacific rhododendron (*R. macrophyllum*) also known as “rosebay” occurs in Canada only in the Skagit Valley, two very small populations on Vancouver Island, and a single 1906 collection from Chilliwack Valley. It is on the list of rare vascular plants of British Columbia, where it is rated R2 (very restricted distribution, large populations). It is one of three plant species protected by B.C. legislation under the “Dogwood, Rhododendron, Trillium Protection Act” (1948, 1979). Because of its attractiveness and its interest for the gardening nursery trade it is potentially threatened, and has been rated

Vulnerable in the recent List of Endangered Plants of British Columbia (B.C. Committee, 1990). In the U.S. it is found in coastal Washington, Oregon and California as far south as Monterey Bay.

Stands of rhododendrons occur in the upper Skagit Valley at approximately 3.5 km below the confluence of the Sumallo and Skagit Rivers. This is relatively close to the well-known Sumallo Grove along the highway in Manning Park. Downstream, rhododendron stands occur at irregular intervals between 1–5 km apart, down to the confluence of the Klesilkwa and Skagit Rivers. Two populations occur in the Klesilkwa Valley approximately 3 km up the road from the 40 km bridge. From here, rhododendron stands continue down valley at irregular intervals to within 4.5 km of the U.S.



border. Outlying stands of rhododendron occur on the west side of the Skagit River between St. Alice and McNaught Creeks. A single plant southeast of the Skagit Valley at Lightning Lake (Perdu Lake) in Manning Park has been reported.

The rhododendron stands occur at low elevations near the valley bottom at between 500–600 m above sea level. Most of the stands occur on older, higher river terraces, although some extend up the valley slope to 1100 m. The typical soil material is very coarse gravels and stones from fluvial and colluvial deposits. There is deep surface organic matter of rotten wood and coarse coniferous litter. The soils are dry, well-drained, and this is reflected in the typically dry habitat species growing with the rhododendron.

R. macrophyllum was reported by naturalist Archibald Menzies in 1792 in his “Journal of Vancouver’s Voyage”. The first botanical description of dried specimens of this plant was written in England by David Don in 1834. He used the species name *macrophyllum*

Skagit Valley Rhododendron locations

meaning "big-leaved", because his specimen had larger leaves than any other rhododendron known at that time. Today, however, the name is inappropriate since a great many Asiatic rhododendron species, since introduced, have much larger leaves.

In 1855, the botanist Joseph Hooker, in describing plants collected during Captain Vancouver's voyages, published a description of this plant under the name of *R. californicum*. This name was in common use by botanists for nearly a century. However, by the rules of nomenclature, the first or earliest plant name is the valid one, therefore *R. macrophyllum* is correct.

Seeds of the Pacific rhododendron were collected and taken to England by the plant explorer William Lobb for the firm of Messrs. Veitch, Nurserymen. In 1885, plants were exhibited in the horticultural show at Crystal Palace, London.

Although many growers began to experiment with hybridization of rhododendrons about this time, it appears that the Pacific rhododendron was not used to any extent as a parent. The species *R. catawbiense*, a native of eastern North America and very similar in appearance to *R. macrophyllum*, has been used frequently in hybridization since the 19th century.

One hybrid rhododendron named 'Albert Close' is a result of a cross between *R. maximum*, a native of eastern North America and *R. macrophyllum*. Flowers of 'Albert Close' are pink with dark throat markings.

Mountain Misery

At our September Meeting Clarice Clark demonstrated the use of ground positioning systems (GPS) to plot the location of species rhododendrons on maps. There are five species native to Western North American and the project she is undertaking with the help of volunteers is to map the distribution of these species. *R. albiflorum*, known to hikers as 'Mountain Misery' will be a real challenge because it grows so thickly. There is some interest in the Fraser South chapter in updating our knowledge of the Skagit Valley population of *R. macrophyllum*. Start packing for the expedition next June!

ROOTSTALK

BY INDUMENTUM

Colour in the garden is certainly a matter of taste and your taste can change as your garden matures with you. We used to plant drifts of *Impatiens* for summer colour but we have been using less and less as the years go by. A year ago I wrote about monochromatic green gardens in the rhododendron areas. This year we have developed a liking for spot colour in the August garden. The subtle green shades of the rhododendron foliage can contrast nicely with a bright spot of red or blue. The effect is not unlike early spring when *R. 'Grace Seabrook'* comes into flower ahead of most of the other rhododendrons.

Hydrangea macrophylla can provide a startling spot of blue and it is used extensively in the Valley Garden in Windsor Great Park among the rhododendron species collection. Our current favourite for spot colour in August/September is the hardy *Fuschia magellanica* 'Riccartoni'. It flowers continuously and profusely for a couple of months and is much more elegant than the common large flowering fuschia of hanging basket fame. 'Riccartoni' freezes to the ground in our garden in most winters and the dead woody stems have to be cut in the spring. In milder climates such as Cornwall in southwest England it forms glorious hedgerows along the back roads. Last summer we found ourselves at Brodick Castle on the Isle of Arran and were astonished to see *Fuschia magellanica* 6 m tall with stems as thick as tree trunks. Because it has to make a fresh start every year, our oldest plant is never taller than 1.5 m which is a nice size for our garden. Other advantages of this plant are that it attracts hummingbirds and propagates easily from tip cuttings.