

# The Yak

a chapter of the ARS

Volume 9

Number 5

May 1997

May 21, 1997  
St. Andrew's Anglican Church Hall  
20955 Old Yale Road, Langley  
8.00 p.m.

## MEMBERS APPRECIATION NIGHT

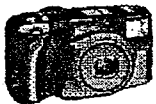
you may sell your plants, pot  
labels, books, and ??

Fraser South's Famous Annual

## BEER BOTTLE TRUSS SHOW

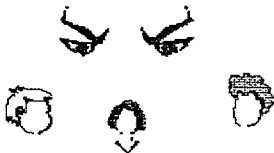


## LILLIAN EMERSON



PICTURES FROM THE UK

{ DOUBTLESS WITH COMMENTS FROM HER COMPANIONS }



## yakalenda

- \* May 21 FSRS Regular Meeting  
you are asked to arrive early to  
help with maintenance in  
'Ella's Garden' - (see inside)
- \* June 18 At Williams Park  
FSRS Annual



#### April Meeting

The Ella J. Crabb Memorial Award was presented to Pat Dahl; the Gerry C. Emerson Memorial Award was presented to Arnim Roeske, and Les Clay was the recipient of the Harold Johnston Memorial Award. We are pleased to have been able to honour these very worthy members of Fraser South.

Glen Patterson added to an interesting meeting with his thought provoking talk of Rhodies and Rocks. If we were all to follow his lead how might the valleys become miniature mountains! My only concern is - how about maintaining moderate temperatures, and moisture during our hot dry spells of summer?

#### May Meeting

Member appreciation night, and we invite members to bring plants - or what have you - for sale, and promise that the club will not snatch away the customary percent - you may take it all home with you!

You are invited to bring your favourite rhodie trusses for display and admiration; judgment to be rendered by popular opinion as usual. These are the classes: White, Pink, Red, Lavender (& all purple shades), Yellow, Multicolour, Most lurid; Most flaccid; Best last years truss; Most elegantly weevil notched.

In addition, Lillian Emerson has agreed to show us some of her pictures from her U.K. "Tour" last spring.

#### June Meeting

William's Park has been booked for June 18 th. for our annual picnic. Don't miss it!!

#### From The President

The plan was, to send this letter from Israel - but, regrettably, my planned pilgrimage fell through. Nevertheless, Israel is on my mind. It is a special place. It is an horticultural treasure as well. Geraniums are perennials, up to 10 ft. in height; rosemary shrubs become trees on a forested hillside. Trees that are not hardy in the Fraser Valley thrive in the Middle East. (Rhododendrons are trees - just slow growing, but they are intolerant of Israel's climate)

Trees are such a precious gift. They not only provide oxygen for us to breathe, but also food to eat, wood for building houses

and furniture, pulp for paper, fuel for warmth, and shade for rest and relaxation. In their great variety trees provide natural beauty. Some species are known for their special qualities: the mighty oak is known for its durability and strength: the whispering pine provides a soft hush in the background as the wind blows through its needles: the weeping willow displays its cascading branches that gracefully sway in the breeze, often overhanging a quiet pond.



One of the most remarkable trees on earth is the olive tree. Most of us are not too familiar with olive trees because they do not grow near where we live. However, throughout Israel it was, and is the most important of all trees because it is a source of food, light, hygiene and healing. When I first visited Israel I was fascinated by the olive trees which covered the terraced mountain in Galilee, Judea and Samaria. With their unique gnarled and twisted trunks and evergreen tops they have a grace and character that sets them apart from other trees.

Olive trees, their fruit and the oil of their fruit have long played an important role in the daily life of Israel. For nearly 8,000 years, olives have been eaten as a Mediterranean staple food, and olive oil has been used for cooking, in lamps for light, for medicine, and for anointing oil in religious ceremonies. By the time of the Roman conquest of Judea, the olive had become one of the most basic dietary items, even of the poor.

\*\*\* to be continued\*\*\*

Bobby Ogdon



# Literary Landscapers

## Part II

### *William Wordsworth 1770 - 1850*

It should not surprise us that the supreme poet of Nature in the English Language was also a landscaper of note, an expert gardener, and a critic of landscape painting. Most of the attitudes we take for granted about Nature ( that it is good for us, that it is healing and restorative, that spiritual life is reflected in it) have come to us through William Wordsworth and his fellow poet, Samuel Taylor Coleridge. The attitudes they espoused gave birth to the English Romantic Movement , of which we are the heirs , and as far as gardening is concerned, the result is the idea of naturalness in gardening.

Wordsworth's predecessor, Alexander Pope, discussed previously, also advocated gardens that should conceal all traces of human interference, but in practice his five acres at Twickenham featured mostly a formal design. Nevertheless his ideas were influential, and though Wordsworth rebelled against Pope's poetic practice ( you wont find a rhymed couplet in the whole of the 19th Century) he picked up on the landscaping ideas of Pope and his successors.

Wordsworth's first garden evolved when he and his sister Dorothy set up a household together at Dove Cottage at Grasmere in the English Lake District. Orphaned since the age of seven , Dorothy had never

had a home of her own until William inherited some money from a friend in 1795, and they at first lived in Dorsetshire. They always wanted to return to live in their native Lake District, and so life at Dove Cottage was the fulfillment of a dream.

The garden and orchard at Dove Cottage was the creation of family and friends. Russell Noyes book, Wordsworth and the Art of Landscape, (Indiana University Press, 1968) describes how William's brother John planted trees and sodded the wall. Fellow poet Coleridge discovered a rock seat in the orchard and cleared away the brambles ; but William and Dorothy planned and did most of the work. It is a small garden, and you can visit it today and see the stepping stones which they laid up the slope. They loved to forage for wild plants: thyme, columbine, daisies snowdrops, ferns, lichens and mosses (p.107). Wordsworth liked to go on long walks and compose poetry, leaving Dorothy to do a good deal of the practical digging.. In 1800 she wrote in her Journal: "Transplanted raddishes after breakfast, walked to Mr. Gells...gathered mosses and plants. The woods extremely beautiful with all autumnal variety and softness, I carried an basket for mosses, and gathered some wild plants. Oh! That we had a book of botany..."(The Grasmere Journals, Oxford Anthology of English Literature, vol 2.,1973,p.618) William and Dorothy created an orchard garden at Dove Cottage in harmony with the hills , planted with the wild things around them. This garden, and the surrounding mountains and lakes were the inspiration for some of the most beautiful religious poetry in the English Language.

When Wordworth married, Dove Cottage became too small for the household, and in the autumn of 1806 Sir George Beaumont offered the family the use of a spacious farmhouse on his estate. William was asked to replan the estate, called Coleorton. His special project was the design of the Winter Garden.



The Yak

(Noyes, p.113). This was a plot of ground , a little over an acre in size, where stone had once been quarried. At one end a massive wall sheltered the site from winter winds. Wordsworth suggested the space be enclosed with evergreens and cypresses, and behind these a row of fir trees. He wanted to suggest a space "where winter cannot touch..."

The wall was to be covered with ivy and pyracanthus or other winter plants bearing scarlet berries. He used lots of holly throughout, stone paths, bowers and allees, and a stone fountain. Flower beds were edged with boxwood, one bed was full of American Azaleas that came from Nottingham, fourteen miles away. Wordsworth knew it would take a few years before his vision was accomplished, and in 1818 Sir George wrote to him: "You cannot imagine how beautiful the winter garden grows. ..."

In 1813 Wordsworth and his family, which always included Dorothy, moved to his final home, Rydal Mount, and here he indulged his love of landscape gardening. Noyes wrote that before he was done, he had turned the grounds at Rydal Mount into a garden paradise.

Rydal's location commanded fine views, and the five acres offered great possibilities. Noyes writes:

He raised the mound, giving it two ascents he reduced the kitchen garden, transforming part of it to lawn; he constructed three terraces, each having its special use and attractiveness; he built a summer house...he cleared and walled a well. And built a pool for goldfish and silverfish; he laid out pathways and stone steps; he planned gates and gravelled walks; and he set out innumerable native shrubs, trees and flowers on the slopes. (P127.)

It is good to know that Rydal Mount is not much changed today from what it was at the time of Wordsworth's death in 1850. One of Wordsworth's greatest poems is Tintern Abbey , and it is a fine example of how landscape affects one's mind and heart. He wrote it in 1798 and it was included in the book LYRICAL BALLADS, along with Coleridge's Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner, another example of Nature working on the mind. Critics usually think that Wordsworth's later poetry is not so fine as his early work, yet if you give a close reading to his late sonnet series , The River Duddon, which follows the river from its source in the mountains to its end in the sea, you will find it is the landscaper's eye that gives the poetry much of its charm.

Janet Warner

( editors note : sorry Janet - I'm such a philistine that I cannot think of Wordsworth without his 'crowd' )



#### A Rhododendron Primer (cont'd from pg.5)

He also recommends it for massed planting in large gardens.

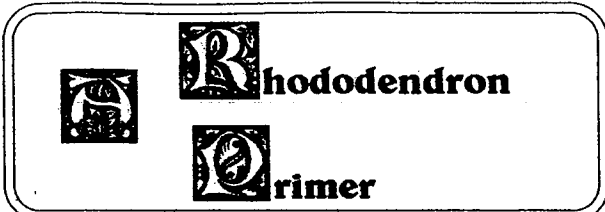
'Bow Bells' is reported to do best if grown in partial shade: too much sun may cause chlorosis, and too much shade may result in leggy growth. As well, avoid over fertilizing 'Bow Bells' as this may result in leaves suffering fertilizer burn. It is hardy to -21 C, very reliable in the Lower Mainland.

'Bow Bells' has been used in the hybridization of such plants as 'Lori Eischelser', 'Reve Rose' and 'Kristin'.

Norma Senn

*The Yak*

Editor: M.L. Trembath  
address: 25149 72nd Ave  
Aldergrove, BC, Can  
V4W 1J1  
Phone and fax: 604 856 7261  
\*NB NEW E MAIL ADDRESS  
email - VE7HY@planeteeer.com



**is for barbatum**

**Bhutan** *R. barbatum* - bearded - from Nepal, and Sikkim is found at levels 9,400 to 11,300 feet.

A shrub or tree - up to 30 feet or more, the new shoots are bristly; mature bark is smooth, peeling and a distinctive reddish plum colour. Leaf shape is somewhat variable, from 7 cms to 24 cms. in length and 2.5 to 10 cms. broad, lanceolate to elliptic. The leaves are shiny and dark green above, somewhat bullate; the under surface is pale yellowish green.

*R. barbatum* blooms in March or April. The flowers are 1 to 3 inches long, tubular campanulate, bright scarlet or scarlet-crimson and having 5 black nectar pouches. The bloom is of 10 to 20 florets in a rounded compact truss. Some forms have a rather loose truss.

Truly a harbinger of spring; a plant covered with brilliant red flowers lifts the winter-weary soul. A must for the early garden.  
Vern Finley



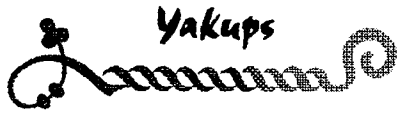
**is for Bow Bells**

*Bow Bells* was introduced in 1934 by L. de Rothschild and received an Award of Merit in 1935. This easily rooted cultivar, a hybrid of 'Corona' and *R. williamsianum*, has lovely deep pink buds that gradually change to light pink flowers. 'Bow Bells' favours its *williamsianum* heritage by having bell shaped flowers in loose trusses, each floret borne on a dark red pedicel. Blooming time in this area is early May.

An added feature of 'Bow Bells' is the deep bronzed colour of the new foliage. As the season progresses, the leaves change to jade green. Bright red bud scales also add interest to this neat, tidy plant. Like the flowers, the foliage is reminiscent of *R. williamsianum*.

While 'Bow Bells' is an old hybrid, it is still a good choice for the smaller garden. It forms a compact, mounded plant up to about 1 meter in height after ten years. In Harold Greer's Guidebook, he advises that 'Bow Bells' can eventually become somewhat larger (up to 1.6 - 1.8 m), so plan on giving this lovely hybrid enough space. (see page 4,col2)

The Yak



*I wish to thank FSRS for designating me as the first recipient of the Ella J. Crabbs Memorial Award. Having known Ella and Dave personally, and worked on many projects with them, the award means a great deal to me*  
Thank you. Pitt Dahl.

I have received somewhat lukewarm reports about the Willowbrook sale - very very busy initially, and then business petering out. The final result not known, but perhaps not as successful as we had hoped. To those faithful workers, it was a very long day, and we are most grateful for your devotion to the cause. For those who didn't come, you were missed.

N.B.

FSRS has planted and maintained the garden at the north side of the sanctuary of St. Andrew's - known as Ella's Garden. It is now in need of a bit of T.L.C. - weeding and deadheading, and you are asked to lend a hand by coming half an hour or so early to the May meeting. The work is not arduous, and many hands will make light of it. If you do not feel up to 'doing' sales, perhaps this is a way you can help your club. See you there.

From the ARS

We have been asked to notify all ARS members of the resignation of Barbara Hall as Executive Director of the ARS. Anyone interested in this position should contact Lynn Watts. If you are interested in more information - I have the required address and also a list of twenty ideal qualifications for the position - read it and quail. Editor.

\*\*\*\*\*

The above note was written, as requested, but prior to the convention. It was announced on the convention floor, that the position had been filled. What a shame - all you people eager to apply !!

# DOORSTALK

## BY INDUMENTUM

Rhododendrons love rocks. In their natural habitat they grow right on the rocks, on top of rocks and beside rocks. Rhododendrons are mountain plants. Rocks and rhododendrons go together like hanging baskets and petunias.

This is the Glen Patterson view of the place of rhododendrons in a West Coast garden style. Forget the rolling woodland setting and the English cottage garden and start building a mountainside. Of course, it is all very well for Glen to promote the use of rocks when his garden is blessed with sweeping outcrops of bedrock notched with crevices and ledges for squeezing in lovely specimens of kuisanum. Mike Bale also went looking for a mountainside and has created the marvellous Lu Zhu complete with huge cliff faces with hanging gardens and not a petunia in sight.

What are the rest of us to do in our bucolic pastoral setting in the Fraser Valley complete with cows and wire fences? Well you could always grow petunias. Alternatively you could start digging and the chances are you will find rocks, lots of them. We live on what geologists call boulder clay which was deposited by glaciers tens of thousands of years ago. As the name implies, the soil is largely clay with a whole lot of boulders sitting in it like currants in a plum pudding. Rhodos do not particularly like clay but we do know they are partial to rocks. By using the rocks for retaining slopes and creating raised beds, the drainage problems of clay can be significantly mitigated. At the same time you can create the impression of a rocky mountainside and the rhodos can frolic beside their beloved boulders.

Over the past ten years I have dug up about a thousand rocks and have now essentially run out. Every now and then, though, we discover another buried treasure and go at it with a four foot iron bar for levering and a stout shovel. If you find a really big rock you can tell whether you can dig it up by testing with the iron bar to see if can be moved even slightly. The rule is "If you can move it you can move it".

Fortunately my neighbours detest rocks so I have set up a local bartering system. I trade their rocks for tired old rhodos or even lovely specimens that the Head Gardener says do not fit into the colour scheme. My neighbours think that giving away a huge moss encrusted rock in exchange for the yellowy pink form of 'Virginia Richards' is the most amazing bargain. As for me, I am laughing all the way to the bank which needed just one more rock to keep it nicely in place.