

# The Yak

a chapter of the ARS

Volume 9

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September 17, 1997  
St. Andrew's Anglican Church Hall

20955 Old Yale Road, Langley  
8.00 p.m.



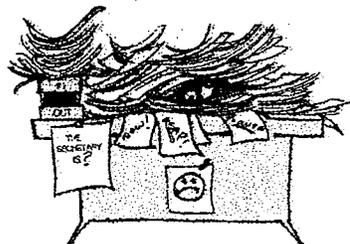
**HARRY WRIGHT**



of Courtney, BC

Nurseryman, grower and fancier of rhododendrons,  
Mr. Wright has had an article published in the most  
recent issue of the ARS Journal

Mr. Wright has expended much time and effort in  
preparing a data base to include rhododendrons,  
both hybrid and species, successfully grown in the  
area comprising District One. I hope many of you  
have responded to his requests for information on  
the plants growing in your garden.



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## *yakalendar*

Sept.21 Urban Farmers' Fall Fair  
920 Ryall Ave. New Westminster  
10.00 a.m. - 4.00 p.m.

Sept. 27 ?? propagating clinic  
Clay's nursery  
(if enough members are interested)

Oct. 10-12 ARS Western Regional  
Convention  
San Jose, California

Oct. 15 regular meeting of FSRs

Newsletter Editor :  
M.L. Trembath  
25149 72nd Ave.  
Aldergrove, BC, V4W 1J1  
Phone & fax 604 856 7261  
email - ve7hv@planeteeer.com

## Editors Notes

It's over !!



Now is the time - to recover from a busy summer  
? - lots of travel, lots of visitors ??

- to plant out  
still languishing



those poor things  
in pots ?

- to gather  
all those super

- to take  
your neigh-

-to move that  
getting

- to separate  
that clash - or  
each other" ?



seed - nearly ripe -  
crosses you made  
cuttings, yours or  
bours ?

plant that is  
squeezed out ?  
those plants  
"fail to enhance



GO FOR IT !!

If you are interested, we can have a "hands on  
clinic" on propagation, possibly the end of Sept.

A gardener's work is never done  
It is supposed to be such fun.  
I slosh around in Wellington(s)  
And wish the rain would change to sun.

When, at last, the sun comes out,  
And all the people laugh and shout,  
I strain to move some plants about  
Although I fear it's all for nowt.

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### From the President

Likely it all began with a casual observation of  
rhododendrons at a nursery or a residential garden.  
You liked what you saw. Little did you know, at the  
time, that you would be consumed by such a passion  
for the genus. Soon, however, you began to see  
rhododendrons hiding behind every bush.

The next step in your rhodo-education was to  
note and appreciate the diversity of colors, followed  
by a love of the beauty and subtlety of foliage

You even learned to be a name dropper, tossing  
"indumentum" into conversations at social gather-  
ings and business meetings. Then a revelation:  
azaleas are rhododendrons and each is divided  
into two groups - species and hybrids. Your ignorance  
was dispelled somewhat as you acquired the skill to  
recognize a few of them by name. And, your collec-  
tion of plants was proliferating and expanding. Your  
garden became a place of enjoyment and wonder.

The above scenario represents an abbreviated  
growth curve. To be accurate, growth is not really a  
curve, but rather a series of gradients and plateaus.  
Plateaus are levels of ease, comfort and homeostasis  
(balance). Gradients are times of learning and  
education when we experience moments of stress and  
a kind of disequilibrium. The benefit of such discom-  
fort is that we actually learn and grow, meaning that  
we move up to the next level of knowledge and  
experience.

Now is the time to take the next step, to move  
up to the next level (plateau) in your rhodo-education.  
It's time to try propagation by cuttings. The time in  
fact is just right - in September the current year's  
growth is ready for cutting. Now is the time to add  
this propagation skill to your gardening portfolio.  
Further, it is your chance to acquire a clone of that  
treasured rhododendron or azalea and add to your  
garden collection.

Consult gardening books in our library or some  
of the A.R.S. journals for specific step-by-step  
methods. Even better, ask for help from others in our  
club. Many in our garden club are experienced  
propogators and will be happy to answer your  
questions. If you need cuttings from a variety of  
species or hybrids, visit my garden. I will be pleased  
with your interest and will gladly share cuttings and  
what works for me.

There will be some anxiety as you anticipate  
the unknown or unexperienced art of propagation.  
Growth gradients engender a certain amount of  
anguish. Nevertheless, press on - you'll be glad you  
did. The next plateau awaits and offers a sense of  
accomplishment. As you move up you will grow,  
along with your garden.

Bobby Ogdon



## A Rhododendron Primer

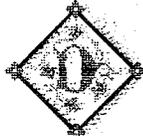


( due to miscommunication - no doubt on my part - both authors have written on hybrids this month - so I will fill in the gap for species with one of my own favourites. Ed.)



### is for *discolor*

This robust and lusty ( it tends to set prodigious amounts of seed) member of the subsection *Fortunea* is a worthy addition to any garden big enough to contain it. Twenty-odd years from seed, my plants are 15 - 20 feet in height, well clothed in typically impeccable *fortunei* foliage, dark above and pale below. The bloom tends to be pastel - cream or pink, often with yellow staining in the throat, and beautifully scented. Its relatively late blooming period (June) has led many to use it as a parent.



### is for *Daydream*

Vern Finley

A Rothschild Rhododendron of 1936 - ( *Lady Bessborough* x *R.griersonianum* ) - it received an AM from the RHS in 1940.

We grow a clone called "Biscuit" which is said to be hardier than the AM form, (altho' the Cox's question it being a different clone.) Once established in our garden, it has become a prolific bloomer. It blooms mid May for us, and is certainly hardy to 5 degrees F.

Flower buds of deep rose open red, the flower fading to a creamy yellow, but maintaining a red throat. As it ages, the flower takes on its characteristic biscuit colour, and the throat also pales. The florets are rather lax, but the inflorescence is sufficiently full to give an impression of roundness, standing out against flat, oblong leaves which in our plant are dark green. In a woodland setting it is a beautiful sight.



### is for *Dora Amateis*

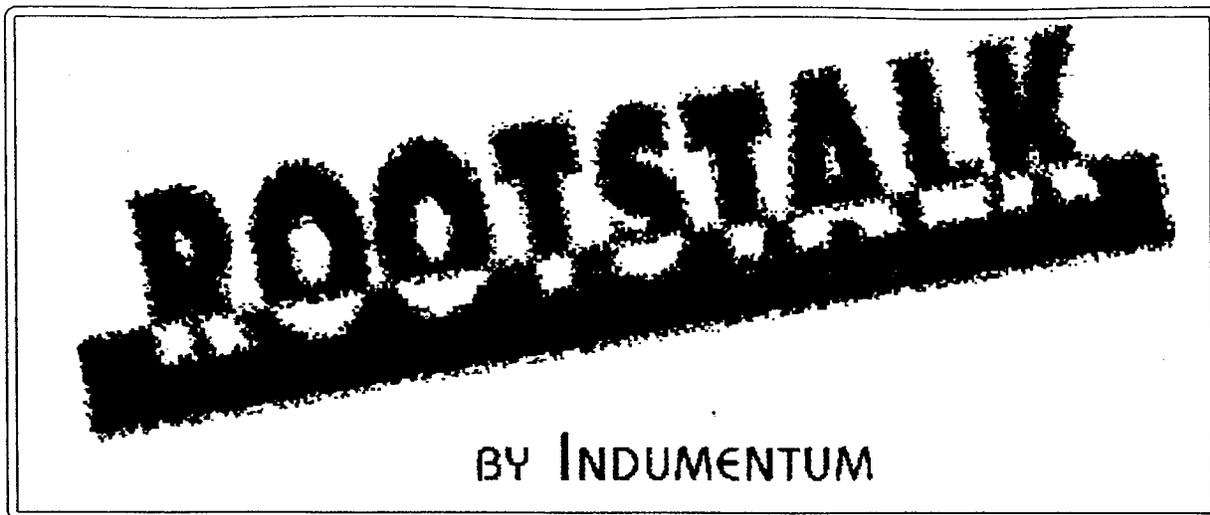
Norma Senn

Perhaps the most difficult thing about this cultivar is knowing how to pronounce "Amateis"; I have heard several variations, and am never quite sure which is right. No matter how it is pronounced though, it is a great plant for any garden. "Dora Amateis" is a hybrid of two of my favourite species - *R carolinianum* x *R. ciliatum*, and it happily has some of the best characteristics of each parent. It is reliably hardy in the Pacific Northwest ( to -26 C according to P & K Cox, Encyclopedia of Rhododendron Hybrids)

The fragrant flowers appear early in May, opening a blush pink then quickly fading to pure white. Plants cover themselves with flowers. In my garden, I particularly notice "Dora" in the evening because, like so many white flowered plants, it seems to gleam in the twilight.

I have "Dora" growing in a mixed shrub bed that receives shade from the early afternoon on. The leaves on my own plant are a rich dark green. However, some references indicate that the foliage is pale green, and that as the plant ages, it tends to have some problems with chlorosis. I wonder if this foliage problem is found more commonly in eastern North America where "Dora Amateis" is very popular. I haven't seen the problem locally.

In addition to being a nice specimen plant, it would be good for massed plantings, or for use as a border or low hedge. Because of its hardiness and compact habit ( height to about one meter), it would also be a good choice for container planting.



A favourite topic in this space, is the ideal climate for growing rhododendrons. Frank Kingdon-Ward once pointed out that in the natural habitat of rhododendrons, the bulk of the rainfall falls in the summer months when the plants are active and thirsty. Under the circumstances it is very sporting of rhododendrons to put up with the less than ideal conditions in our cultivated gardens, particularly the lack of rainfall in the Summer.

This year we had an exceptionally wet Spring and the rain continued to fall until the end of June. The rhododendrons responded with vigorous flushes of growth and it occurred to me that it would be interesting to record the event as it may not happen again for a while. At least not until next year.

On September 1, I measured the length of new growth from the base of the new growth to the base of the new bud. Only branching growth was included because single stems, particularly from near the base of the plant, can behave like suckers.

As you might expect, the fortunei hybrids produced some of the longest stems. Most notable were Cotton Candy at 9.5 inches, Naomi Glow with 10 inches, the Loderi Group at 12.5 inches and Jan Dekens at 10 inches. Not to be outdone, good old Phyllis Korn scored 12 inches and Taurus a healthy 11.5 inches. Among the yak hybrids, Ken Janeck weighed in with 5 inches but the longest stem was on Solidarity with 8 inches. Even some of the diminutive species joined in the fun with *R. bureavii* at 3.5 inches and *R. pachysanthum* with 4 inches. Despite a late start, *R. auriculatum* was one of the most lively species with 9 inches of new growth. The most vigorous species, however, was *R. fulvum* with an astounding 10.5 inches. So which was the most vigorous hybrid? Would you believe Polar Bear with multiple stems measuring up to 15 inches!

With all this vigorous growth going on we will have to start moving plants again. As soon as the rain comes. We only moved 77 last year.