



The Yak

a chapter of the ARS

Volume 11

Number 9

November 1998

Fraser South Rhododendron Society

Meetings held every third Wednesday ,
8.00 pm St. Andrews Anglican Church
Hall Langley

Executive, 1998

President: Les Clay 530 5188

Past Pres.: Bobby Ogdon 583 7434

Vice Pres.: Don Selman 533 4980

Secret.: Janet Warner 857 0788

Treas.: John Warner 857 0788

Directors: three years

Colleen Forster 534 1840

two year -

Michael Neyedli 931 1199

one year -

Trevor Badminton 856 0046

Committees :

Programme - Trev. Badminton
Ways and Means - Diane Scott
Library - Pat Dahl and Jan.
Warner

Kitchen, coffee and calories -
Melba Johnson, Lillian
Emerson

Hostess and Greeter - Phil
Anderson

Security - John Anderson
Membership - Vicki Neyedli
Newsletter editor -

M. L. Trembath - 856 7261
fax. - 856 7261
e mail -

ve7hv@planeteeer.com

Yakalenda

*Nov.18 - FSRs meeting

Our Very Own
Trevor Badminton
of the Rhodo Ranch
Yak Hybrids

*Dec. 9 Note the date -
one week earlier than regular
night



Party Time!!



We are celebrating
FSRS tenth year
and if that isn't enough!! then
call it slightly early Christmas
celebration Les and Bev Clay
are being host and hostess.

* Jan. 20, 1999 FSRs AGM
and election of officers.

We hope to have a panel of
experts to answer questions,
or to illustrate aspects of the
growth, development and care
of rhodies.

- * Sat. April 3, 1999
FSRS annual Pant Sale
Clay's Nursery 12 - 4 pm
- * Sat. April 24, 1999
FSRS Annual Truss Show
and Plant Sale at
Willowbrook Mall
- * April 27-8, 1999
International Rhododendron
Species Symposium
Bellevue, Wa
- * April 27 - May 3 1999
ARS Annual Convention
Bellevue, Wa



Inside

Report & information.....	2
Letter from ARS Pres.....	2
Obituary.....	3
Letter to editor.....	3
Remembering.....	4
A Rhododendron Primer....	5
Rootstalk.....	6

October Meeting

I think that I keep writing about preceding meetings so that you who missed them will wish you hadn't !!

We were treated to an excellent presentation from a man who knows whereof he speaks. It was of considerable interest to me to see the large amount of native material which could associate very happily in my species-restricted plantings. (I truly cannot call mine a 'garden') I only wish that some might be more readily established - anybody have any luck with "Bunch Berry" *Cornus canadensis* ?? I do know that it is possible to grow the native trillium - if one has some to start with, and has the patience. This method is courtesy of Vern Finley. One places a flat with growing medium under - or as close as possible - to a group of blooming plants; this to permit the seed to fall on your flat. The first year only one little leaf appears - next year two, and then - after you've long since forgotten you even did it - in the third year behold ! the characteristic three leaves. You can shift the entire group then, into the desired spot in your garden.

I have often admired at a certain time of year a shrubby plant that grows in our ditches and now know that it is "Goat's Beard" (*Aruncus dioicus*) . I know - you probably already knew that didn't you ? - but I was happy to learn it !

ARS websites

ARS homepage:

<http://www.rhododendron.org>

R & A News:

<http://members.aol.com/RandANews/news.html>

also - note the website given in Bud's letter,
next column

From: RhodieBud@aol.com (i.e. from the
ARS president - Mr.H.C."Bud" Gehrlich)

Subject: Western Regional Meeting

Hi everyone, we are back from the regional meeting in Florence Oregon, and a very good one it was. It was a pleasure to see how a relatively small chapter such as Siuslaw (about 60 members) can put on such a successful meeting when everyone pitches in and does the work. I hope that it will encourage other smaller chapters to take on these meetings in the future.

At the Board of Directors meeting, new officers were elected who will take office at the end of the Annual Meeting in Seattle in the spring of '99.

Lynn Watts moves up from Western VP to President, and Mike Stewart joins the officers as Western VP. Ed Reiley stays on as Eastern VP, Jean Beadry as Secretary and Tim Watts as

Treasurer. A strong group of officers, please support them and work with them over the next years.

June Sinclair was awarded the Silver Medal for her contributions to the Society and to the promotion of rhododendrons in general.

Awards were also presented to those chapters who exceeded the goals that had been set for increasing their membership. The drive to increase membership is strong, and a new attitude toward membership is apparent.

Visit the ARS website and see all of the good things that are available, <rhododendron.org>

There is also a site set up by the Alderman Library, the official repository of the ARS papers. Try them at <www.lib.virginia.edu/science/guides/s-rhodo.htm>

Of course the RANDAnews always has something of interest. These should all be linked together soon. Thanks for listening, if you have ideas or suggestions, please write to me.

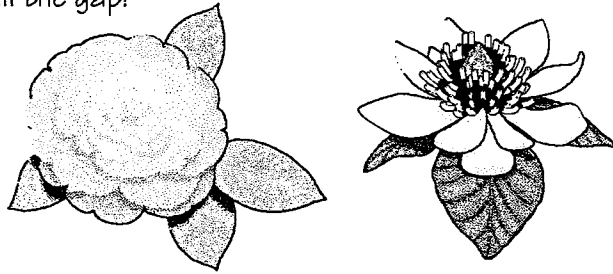
Best regards, Bud

It is with deep regret that I must inform you of the death of one of our members.
Jane Whitehead
(JP to many of us)
died October 20, 1998

It is with sadness that I report the death of Jane (J.P.) Whitehead. Jane was a member of Vancouver Chapter before joining Fraser South, and she often rode with my daughter Ann or myself to the Vancouver meetings. Jane was a very direct person, and I, for one, really valued that. More than once she brought me up short on my failures as an editor! She knew what she wanted from the club, and was not about to let us get away with evasions that tried to hide our own ignorance. Baffle-gab was not for Jane! We offer our sincere sympathy to her family - her two sons and their families, and to her good friend Stan Taylor. We will all miss her.

From the President

Les was going to write about camellias and magnolias - but the text had not arrived by publishing time - so here are some pictures to fill the gap!



I have received of the following letter. I thought that some of you might find it of interest:

Dear Friends:

I have been negligent in not bringing this to your attention earlier. My sincere apologies.

It is imperative that you be made aware of an insidious disease, one which may already be present among us.

To give it its full and proper name - the disease is:

rhododendronophiliatits - that is to say - the illness affecting rhododendron lovers. Yes - it is quite a mouthful, and some refer to it only as 'Rhoditis' - I fear this might confuse or obscure the origins. To save you the facial tics that might develop from attempts to wrestle with reading the full

name, I will swallow my desire for accuracy and call the disease - *rhoditis*.

Let me hasten to assure you, gentle reader, this disease, though apparently infectious, has a very low or even negative mortality rate (better referred to as a high longevity rate?) The causative organism has not, to the best of my knowledge, ever been isolated with certainty, and the best minds now seem to think that several operatives may be required to produce a full blown epidemic. The morbidity rate (i.e. obvious evidence of the disease in infected people) is very high AND there is no known cure. Spontaneous remissions have been known to occur, but appear to be very rare.

We know little of its origins, but the disease appears to have arisen in the Far East, and probably it was brought back to Europe by early explorers and plant hunters. The course of the disease in the UK is very interesting - initially it spread slowly and along sharply defined social strata - appearing in owners of 'castles, manors' and large estates, and almost never to be found in the cottages. However, perhaps spread by workers on the estates, by the second decade of the twentieth century evidence of the illness was widespread. Although there is some reason to believe that a very similar disease may be endemic in the eastern United States, the symptoms are slightly different. Following the Second World War there was a great increase in the number of cases reported, and the spread was very rapid. There appears to be an exceptionally high incidence in the Pacific North West - both in Canada and the US.

Despite being classed as an infectious disease (not reportable to Public Health authorities) close proximity to infected individuals does not invariably result in the spread of the disease. (I am personally aware of several cases where those actually living in the same household as a sufferer are themselves, completely free of the disease.)

I deplore the pernicious habit of calling sufferers of *rhoditis* 'rhodaholics'. It is at least slightly descriptive of some of the symptoms shown. These symptoms may include:

(Please turn to Page 4 col 2)



REMEMBERING

Perhaps because the weather is so suitable to the genus, it seems that Vancouver Island can boast as home to many early rhododendron growers. We have printed an article about George Fraser perhaps the best known of the very early growers. (see *The Yak* Vol. 11, no 4, April 1998) Another name that keeps appearing is Buchanan Simpson. It was a bit of time before I realized that the reference was to more than a rhodie hybrid named and disseminated by the Greigs of Royston.

Mr. and Mrs George Buchanan Simpson first visited Lake Cowichan in 1912. They returned in 1914, buying a plot of land from the Stokers who owned acreage and a summer home on the lake. The Stokers were amateur botanists, and very interested in the preservation of native flora. The two couples worked in their gardens and Buchanan Simpson developed a commercial nursery business - a sheet catalogue dated 1928 indicates a primary interest in rare alpinas, species iris, hardy primulas, species rhododendrons and rare hardy flowering shrubs. Seed was obtained directly or indirectly from the plant hunters and through contacts at Kew and Edinburg, and more local sources such as Fraser and Mrs. A.C.U. Berry of Portland. (The 1928 catalogue offered seedlings from Forrest's collecting in 1924-25)

With the death of Dr. Stoker in 1931, and sale of the property, the Buchanan Simpsons sold their nursery stock (to Ted and Mary Greig of Royston) and elected to return to Europe to settle in France or Scotland. Within a few years, they were offered the opportunity to purchase the entire Stoker property and they returned to Lake Cowichan and set about the task of clearing and creating and developing a garden for their own enjoyment. In 1939 and the early 40's the garden was visited by Dr Ian McTaggart-Cowan during his biological studies, and he speaks of the garden and its creators, of the special affinity Buchanan-Simpson had for his plants and the care and attention with which they were grown.

After the death of George Buchanan Simpson in 1958, Mrs. Simpson, and intensely private person, attempted to maintain the garden, but was simply unable to encompass such a large task, and the garden began to revert to wilderness, with plants

being overwhelmed and lost. In 1966 Mrs. Simpson gave the property to the University of Victoria - stipulating that it be known as the Stoker Estate and that she be permitted to remain in residence. She lived in her log house until shortly before her death in 1973

Since the University was unable at that time, to put in place a caretaker with the necessary knowledge and ability to re-establish the garden, an attempt was made to catalogue the garden plants, and to assess how best to save as many as possible from total encroachment by the wilderness. (for an interesting article about this stage see reference 4. below)

Many of the large specimen plants from this garden have been moved to the grounds of the University of Victoria and may still be seen in the Finnerty Gardens.

(For information about the Buchanan Simpsons I am deeply indebted to 1. Leslie and Frank Drew in Rhododendrons on a Western Shore . 2. Papers published in the Cowichan Valley R.S. Newsletter by M.deWeese, Betty Kennedy and Ian McTaggart-Cowan. 3. Article by Ted and Mary Geig in Proceedings of the International Rhododendron Conference , Portland OR, May 1961. 4. ARS Journal Vol.33, No1, 1979)

(continued from Page 3)

1. raised cardiac & respiratory rates
2. increased salivation
3. tremor of hands, and even in severe cases ataxia, and aphasia (the later being extremely rare.)
4. fixed stare, and failure to respond to spouse or children
5. gnashing of teeth - (if prevented from acquiring the desired plant)

These symptoms are most clearly seen during rhododendron truss displays, and plant sales. Little can be done to relieve the symptoms - gentle removal from the triggering situation can sometimes be attempted but carries the danger of untoward reaction on the part of the 'patient'. There does appear to be a slight and temporary lessening of acute symptoms when the object of desire has been settled into the patient's own garden.

Perhaps all we can do - is sympathize.

A Rhododendron Primer



is for *occidentale*

Sub Genus Pentathera
Section Pentathera, Subsection Pentathera

The western or Pacific azalea is one of the American Pacific coast's choice native plants, and typical of many deciduous azaleas, it has a lot to offer. *R. occidentale* has large, fragrant flowers that range in colour from pure white to deep pink. Frequently there is a change in colour from the bud stage to open flowers, and often there is a blotch or flare of contrasting colour on some petals. Most plants flower in mid-May, but individual plants may flower later in the spring, which can offer a longer blooming time. An additional feature of *R. occidentale* is its good fall colour, with a range of foliage colours from clear yellow to deep red.

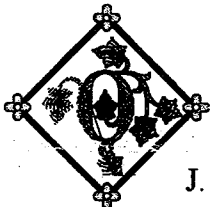


Garden plants tend to reach 2 meters in height, although there are very old plants in wild stands in northern California that can be more than twice this size. During the summer, the upper leaf surfaces are glossy green, and the undersides are a paler blue-green in colour.

There have been many named forms of *R. occidentale*, and in The Larger Species of Rhododendron, P. Cox suggests the clone "Leonard Frisbie" to be the finest one introduced so far. Greer lists several other good forms. Cox suggests that it may take a few years for plants to reach their full flowering potential in the garden, so if planted, give them time to develop.

R. occidentale prefers sites with even moisture throughout the year, but it needs good drainage. In the wild, it can be found growing on a variety of soil types. In exposed locations, it does best with some overhead protection..

Norma Senn



is for *Olive*

R. moupenense X *R. dauricum*
J. Sterling Maxwell. A.M. 1942

Come January or February the beautiful pale mauve-pink flowers of this dwarf lepidote, are often to be seen - peeking out from under a cap of snow.

Buds tend to open over a long period of time - if a very heavy frost browns off the first blooms, there will be a second flush to replace it.

I like to cut branches of Olive, and of forsythia when buds are just beginning to show colour.

In about 5 days, flowers of Olive open and cover the entire branch: (N.B.forsythia takes a little longer) This bouquet makes a pretty nice gift for Valentine's Day

Vern Finley

DOOTSTALK

BY INDUMENTUM



Gardeners lead such an idyllic life in a lovely setting. The pastoral beauty of their surroundings is, more often than not, a result of their creative efforts so they also enjoy a happy sense of achievement. Consequently, gardeners seem to be blissfully unaware of the forces conspiring to undermine their freedom to create their small piece of paradise.

I am sure many Yak readers have concluded that Indumentum has become paranoid about local government and are content to return to their contemplation of the rhododendron bed. As W.H Davies said "What is this life, if full of care, you have no time to stand and stare." Surely we can shut the garden gate and nobody can bother us.

I have written extensively about the tree bylaw in Surrey so I won't trouble you with that again. I have also ranted about watering restrictions and politically correct xeriscaping, anathema to rhododendron lovers. You didn't believe the column about the native plant bylaw but then neither did I. I also never believed that Surrey would ban all burning of garden refuse without consultation with the residents.

The first two wet and windy, weekends of November were previously set aside for burning and everyone in our rural area would get a jolly good bonfire going. I used to think of it as the South Surrey Annual Bonfire Competition. It is no more. Now you happy owners of woodland gardens have to stuff all those deadfalls and prunings into bio-degradable bags. Alternatively you can tie them into politically correct bundles corresponding to the designated length. Good luck to all those who own shrub roses especially the rugosas that specialize in producing masses of Triffid-like prickly tentacles. To those who live further up the valley. Don't laugh. It will be your turn next.

Why do we put up with this steady erosion of our rights to garden in the manner of our forefathers? Why are the forces of political correctness and ignorance gaining the upper hand? Having tried vainly to get garden clubs excited about the tree bylaw, I have given up. I suspect that nobody is raising a fuss because by doing so you bring attention to yourself. And one way to deal with a bad law is to quietly ignore it. So cut down those rotten alders, light the bonfire and water your rhododendrons. You might as well enjoy it while you can, before they have a by-law officer on every street corner.