

FSRS

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for 1999

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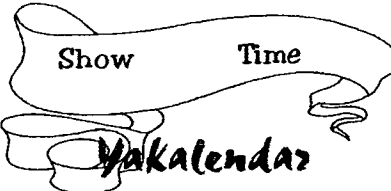
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☼ May 16, FSRS Garden Visit

1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Arnim & Mary Roeske's Garden
19459 5th Ave. Surrey, BC

☼ May 19 FSRS's Justly Famous

BB Truss Show

(see page three for details -
come early)

This Is Also

Member Appreciation Night

(any one with rhodies, companion
plants, divisions of perennials,
extra annuals, crafts, or most
anything may set up shop and
sell their 'produce' and actually
get to keep all the money they
make!!!!!!)

We are pleased to



New Members

Alan and Wenonah March

3759 201A St.

Langley, BC

V3A 1R1

604 534 9062

N.B. Those who won
our beautiful trophies from last
year's show - PLEASE bring
them May 16th for display and
so that they may be awarded
to this years' lucky
winners.

In case you don't remember -
Vern Finley (2), Bobby Ogdon &
Mike Trembath.



Sites

1. ARS Home Page:

<http://www.rhododendron.org>

2.. RandA Newsletter:

[http://members.aol.com/
RandANews/news.html](http://members.aol.com/RandANews/news.html)

3. Home Pages ARS Division 1

[www.hedgerows.com/Canada/
clubbrochures](http://www.hedgerows.com/Canada/clubbrochures)



June 16, 1999



FSRS Annual Picnic



and Awards Night

at the Rhodo Ranch

25282 76th Ave



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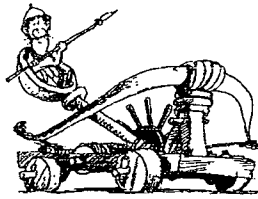
April Meeting

Thanks to Colleen we had something of a wake-up call. Scareee. , never realized just how many wretched things could happen to our poor beloved plants. Having examples in front of us really brought it home. Many thanks Colleen.

Frank Dorsey spoke to us about the dwarf rhododendrons and illustrated his talk with pictures. They look so happy in his garden!! When I see them like that I wish I was growing more of them, but they suffer here - get lost in the weeds, or stepped on too often or don't get the sharp drainage or air drainage some of the choicest ones seem to need.

By the time you settle down with your feet up on a hassock, a cup of coffee in you other hand, and the determination to stay awake long enough to peruse this scintillating publication, our Garden Tours will have been completed for this year. Very successful they have been, too, and most enjoyable. Loads of credit go to our 'Tour' Committee - Mike Bale and John Warner. There is talk of tackling a two day bus tour to see Vancouver Island Gardens next year. If you are interested - let's hear about it now. (we need to get plans in gear) and start saving your pennies.

The Yak



Why me ?



Part One of :

THE RELUCTANT GARDENER

By Anon

When I was first married, my husband gave me a subscription to *Gourmet Magazine*, so that I would become a good cook. After about a year, I gave up the subscription and never wanted to see another cooking magazine again. It was just too threatening. I now feel that way about Gardening Books.

I never wanted to be a gardener. I always thought the dahlias in my mother's garden just grew by themselves. Florist shops were Good Things. I never had the urge to plant anything until I became pregnant, and then by chance I threw some anemone seeds into the ground, and they all came up! This was in Edmonton, where the growing season was only about two months, so there was a quick reward for effort. My husband, on the other hand, would come in from a day's work and walk right through the house and out the back door so that he could check on his tomatoes, painstakingly ripening.

Over the years, I had some success in City Gardens in Toronto, where everybody grew impatiens and nobody grew rhododendrons, for good reason as it turned out. We had a garden where the previous owner had paid for a professional service to come in every other week and mow the lawn, trim hedges, and whatever. We inherited this service for a year or so. I watched them take a huge mechanical mower to a tiny lawn, and trim a philadelphus regularly, and I used to wonder why it never bloomed. We finally sacked the service and let everything go back to the shape God intended, including a red trumpet vine that spectacularly climbed all over the front of the house, and under the driveway, and up the lawn of our neighbour, who became increasingly malevolent. Never mind that people used to come for blocks around to see the vine in bloom. It ruined his tulip bed, and he ostentatiously dug up every bulb anywhere near our house. Couldn't really blame him.

By this time I had some success growing Border Princess Dahlias, though I never dug them up, being so lazy. My mind was not on gardening in those days.

So how is it that we retired to five acres, which had never seen a shovel or a trowel? Why this urge to carve civilization out of wilderness? It must be my husband. However, I have found a few coping

(please turn to page 4 column 2)

Show Rules

1. Any person may enter exhibits
2. Entries in Lepidote Classes or Azalea Classes may be shown as sprays - not to exceed 18 inches in height.
3. All other classes - to be shown as single truss (except class 20 which is specifically for hammerhead truss)
4. You may make multiple entries in any class - so long as each entry is a different clone. (for example - you may enter Crest, Hotei, Goldsworth Yellow and Gold Medal all in class 11, but you may not enter two trusses of Crest)



CLASSES

Division I - Species

- Class 1 Rhododendron (lepidotes)
- Class 2 Azalea (includes pentathera, & tsutsusi)
- Class 3 Hymenantha (lepidote)

Division II - Hybrids

Lepidote Hybrids

- Class 4 Any lepidote hybrid

Azalea Hybrids

- Class 5 Deciduous Azalea
- Class 6 Evergreen Azalea

Elepidote Hybrids

Colour Classes

- Class 7 Red
- Class 8 White
- Class 9 Pale Pink
- Class 10 Dark Pink
- Class 11 Yellow - (to include cream)
- Class 12 Mauve (all shades of purple)
- Class 13 Orange
- Class 14 Bi- or Multicolour

Division III

Special Classes

- Class 15 Best Blotched Truss -*
- Class 16 Most Flaccid
- Class 17 Most Lurid*
- Class 18 Best Last Year's Truss
- Class 19 Most Elegantly Weevil Notched
- Class 20 Best Hammerhead*
- Class 21 Best Speckled Truss*

- * Definitions : 1 'Blotch' - each floret to show on dorsal lobe (or three lobes) a solid colour mark distinctly differing from the base colour of the florets.
2. 'Lurid' - most vividly garish
 3. 'Hammerhead' an inflorescence which arises from more than a single flower bud
 4. 'Speckled' distinguished from blotches by non-solid colour sprinkles and spots either around entire floret, or at least on upper lobe(s) - eg. 'Paprika Spiced'



General Notes

1. Please come early - we will try to set up in the parking lot for early registration.
2. Please make an effort to determine in which class each of your entries belong - (we are always frantic for time to get the show set up for judging)
3. Report to the 'Registrar' on arrival - you will receive the following:
 - a) exhibitor's number
 - b) entry cards - these are index cards, punched and with elastics attached - to be fastened to each bottle containing an entry. On each entry card you are to write: i.- your entry NUMBER, ii.- the name of the variety you are exhibiting, iii.- the number of the class (* See example next page)

- c) voting receptacles - to be attached to each bottle.
- d) a packet containing voting tokens - there are enough for each person to cast one vote in each class.

N.B. If you eat the tokens, you will not be able to vote

The right of arbitrary decisions belongs only to the show committee.

Tags to be completed as shown below:

○

Name of Variety
(eg. *Purple Splendour*)

Class
Number

(Your)
Exhibitor 's
Number

Chocolate Cherry Bars

(also known as "Chocolate" or "Black" Heroin)

OK -here it is. The recipe came to me via Fraser Valley Newsletter - credited to Ken Ladd. I tried it out on the family first, and had no complaints (!) so you at the meeting were the next guinea pigs and from what I heard sounds as if others would like to try it.

BARS :

- 1 pkg Devil's Food Cake Mix (Vicki says she prefers to use Chololate Fudge Cake Mix)
- 1 tin (19 oz.) Chery Pie Filling
- 1 tsp Almond Extract
- 2 Eggs - beaten

FROSTING :

- 1 cup Sugar
- 5 tbsp. Butter (or Marg.)
- 1/3 cup Milk
- 6 oz. (one cup) semi-sweet Chocolate Chips

METHOD :

Heat oven to 350 degrees Grease and flour 15 x 10 inch jelly pan or 13 x 9 inch pan. In a large bowl combine all bar ingredients, stir until well mixed. Pour into prepared pan. Bake in jelly roll pan for 20 - 30 minutes, 13 x 9 pan for 25 - 35 minutes, or until tooth pick inserted in centre comes out clean.

In small saucepan, combine sugar, butter and milk. Bring to boil, stirring constantly. Remove from heat, add chocolate chips, stirring until smooth. Pour over warm bars. Cool. Cut into bars, and garnish if desired. Makes about 36 bars.

Rhododendrons From Seed A Cautionary Tale M. J. Harvey

(reprinted with permission from Victoria Chapter's February newsletter)

Growing rhododendrons from seed is a little like politics. You vote for a party and then find out that you didn't have enough information. What you thought they were going to do turned out to be quite different from what you got.

Thus it is with rhododendrons from seed - you never quite know what you are going to get. And it may take about eight years to find out, which is about the as long as it takes to get the average government to change.

Now don't let me put you off sowing some seeds by stating the above. Growing rhododendrons from seed is real fun, albeit slow-motion fun. And it is what we, as a society, are mandated to do as one of our functions. My aim is to encourage you to try seeds but your need to know the equivalent of the party policy.

So you think you buy a packet of seeds and that the offspring will come up just what the label says? Like radishes? Think again. The world is more complicated than that.

The purpose of this article is to put down a geneticist's experience and to tell cautionary tales as to what you may expect from particular batches of seeds.

I will go through some of the joys and pitfalls of what can happen. And this will just touch on the genetic side, not the practicalities of germinating seeds and growing on the seeds successfully. That is another problem entirely.....

This article is about genetic problems, but first let me digress to human problems. These include several uncontrollable factors which bear on the seedling results. I include here the skills of the individual producer and the care and attention he or she puts into producing the seed supplied.

Some people are very good at producing seed accurate to the label. These are the majority I think. Others are less careful or do not understand the process of pollination and how to control what happens. The problem of "beating the bees" I call it. I have seen plants labeled as a certain hybrid that were better explained as the result of an accidental self-pollination. The fact that the hybridizer thought they were hybrids, or that the label on the packet said a certain thing, may have to be reexamined in the light of results.

I am reminded here of a talk I went to as an undergraduate. The occasion was Clement Attlee addressing the Science Society in Newcastle upon Tyne about his experiences in the War Cabinet. In his experience he said, the scientists they had to consult during the Second World War "were always quarreling among themselves".

The Yak

I thought at the time, and still do, that Mr. Attlee, an Arts graduate, misunderstood what Science was about, and how it operated.

Science operates on the conflict of hypotheses - the clash of ideas. Anyone who is a scientist should expect his ideas to be challenged. This has an echo in seed packet labels. One hypothesis is that the label description is what the contents are. The contrary hypothesis (there is always a contrary hypothesis) is that the label is, in some degree, wrong. This is just another way of saying, keep an open mind.

So doubting that the contents are what the label says is not impugning the honesty, motives or parentage of the seed donor. It is just a normal routine examination of what you have grown. We all make mistakes, I've made many myself, so expect them, and don't get hot under the collar about it. One of the more useful conventions in genetics, possibly the sole remaining relic from the days of chivalry, is that in writing down crosses the lady (female) always goes first. That is, the seed parent goes first, followed by an 'x', and then the pollen (male) parent. This convention should be stuck to religiously and retained on the label, as should any breeder's number attached to the packet. Then if any puzzle arises about the parentage, you may not know who the father (pollen parent) was but you do know who the mother was and can usually make plausible deductions from that.

One of my aims is to enable you to look at a seed list and be able to separate out certain categories to choose something which will fit your interests. I don't want you to spend a few years growing something and then realize that you made a mistake. Choose wisely to start with.

This applies whether you choose from your local chapter offerings or from the much more comprehensive list of the ARS Seed Exchange with its over 1200 items. This latter is published early in the year and has to be requested since it is too expensive to send a copy to each member.

First a few abbreviations:

WC Wild collected (or CW if you don't like the lavatorial implications)

OP Open pollinated, i.e. the flowers left open to insects.

HP Hand pollinated, i.e. pollen from a chosen donor has been dabbed on the stigma, and some method adopted to prevent other pollen from reaching the stigma.

F1 The first generation cross between any two different plants.

F2 The offspring from selfing an F1

1. WC - Wild collected seed.

This is the most reliable seed. It is more likely to produce plants like its female parent than almost any other category. Such seed is rare, especially that from Asia where certain species are being reintroduced for the first time in a century. Note that WC seed is not certain to reproduce the plant from which it was gathered.

There are bees in the wild, and when two rhododendrons flower at the same time within flying distance, natural hybrids may be formed. These have, in the past, caused much confusion especially with Asia being out of bounds for much of this century, preventing observations on the plants in their natural habitats. Cox and Cox, in their Encyclopedia make many comments about this problem. But even so, don't panic, WC seed is generally very reliable.

The Victoria Chapter is the repository for the residue of Peter Wharton's Guizhou seeds. These have been stored in a freezer and are still viable. They become more valuable as each year passes.

2. OP Species From Gardens

This is a variable category. Because gardens, and especially botanical gardens, bring together plants from widely different geographic areas into close proximity, there is a good chance of the bees crossing different species.

You might assume that the seed which has come from say, Edinburgh Botanic Garden, would be really good reliable seed because Edinburgh has one of the world's greatest collections of rhododendrons and the people there are top notch. Not so! Edinburgh has so many plants in such a small area that OP species seeds from there have a higher chance of containing hybrid seed.

My public quarrel with the late David Leach (see JARS 42(4) Fall 1988) revolved around the above problem. David had received some of the first *R. yakushimanum* seeds in North America from Exbury Gardens. He planted out a couple of hundred seedlings in his test field and selected the seven most vigorous and colourful seedlings. One of these he subsequently named 'Mist Maiden'. He maintained that 'Mist Maiden' was a fine selected plant of absolutely pure yak - a species known to be variable in the wild. I maintained that 'Mist Maiden' was a garden hybrid, and that it was its hybrid vigour that attracted his attention in the first place.

I last saw David Leach at the Oban Convention and we talked briefly about it, but never did come to an agreement. I should say that our "quarrel" was really just light hearted banter; we rather enjoyed our differences.

Some OP seed is reliably non-hybrid. This is the case for species which either flower at a time when almost nothing else is open, or belong to a small group which does not cross with other groups. Good examples are *R. mucronulatum*, *R. schlippenbachii*, *R. albrechtii*, *R. camtschaticum*, *R. calophytum* and *R. maximum*

3 a) HP Selfed Species

A selfed species should produce offspring identical (or very close) to its parent. Beware though that a named clone selection never passes on its name to seedlings, however

similar. That is the Law.

3 b) F1 Interspecific Hybrids

This when Species A has been crossed with Species B to produce what is called a primary hybrid. These are what the early hybridizers produced. Even today there is still a use for primary hybrids. For instance my own hobby over the past 25 years has been to make F1 hybrids between indumented dwarf species. The advantage of using species is that the F1 offspring are uniform. I have in fact found that planting out rows of seedlings reveals no variation. (See JARS 39(3) Summer 1985 for an account)

3 c) F2 and other Hybrid Generations

In contrast to the above, it is characteristic of batches of F2 seedlings that no two are identical. I remember the talk by Hachman, the German breeder, in Vancouver when he said that for any particular cross he raised 20,000 seedlings and might select two or three for further consideration. Don't be put off by him. This is big talk designed to impress you.

What is true about the genetics of such crosses is that the genes are 'exploded' into a myriad of combinations. It doesn't really matter whether it is a true F2 or two F2's crossed or any other way of shaking up the genes. The combinations possible among a few hundred genes are in practical terms, infinite.

This is of course the fun part of breeding. Gamblers are attracted to F2's. Your first coin (seedling) may hit the jackpot, or you may end up with empty pockets (a garden full of average pink hybrids). Come to think of it, you are better off gambling with seedlings than with coins. At least you end up with something ! But like breeding race horses , it is important to start with good bloodstock.



(continued from page 2 column 2)

mechanisms for my black thumb. As someone said to me, " I don't have a garden, I have a collection of Plants."

Rule One : Only plant things that come up each year by themselves. Rhodos are good at this. So are bulbs.

Two: Plant shrub roses, which only need to be fed a few times, and watered, and you don't have to worry about pruning.

Three : Plant flowering trees. They look pretty in bloom, and have nice shapes in winter.

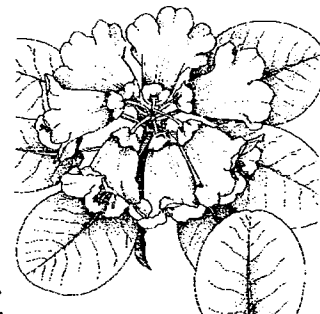
Four: Never read Gardening Magazines

A Rhododendron Primer



is for *R. thomsonii*

Subgen. Hymenantes Sect. Ponticum Subsect. Thomsonia



This beautiful species is well known for its deep red flowers that open in a loose truss in early May. The flowers also have a prominent calyx which can vary from green to the same shade of red as the red flowers. It can take several years for *R. thomsonii* to reach flowering age, but it is worth the wait. It does need to be deadheaded to promote yearly flowering.

R. thomsonii is somewhat difficult to root, so is usually grown from seed. There can be considerable variation in the resulting plants: the ultimate size is usually large - to a height of 7 metres, but there are also smaller plants in cultivation.

The rounded, smooth leaves are distinctive, usually a good medium green above, and glaucous underneath. In time, the bark develops a cinnamon red colour, and peels, which adds another attractive dimension to the plant.

R. thomsonii was named for Thomas Thomson, superintendent of the Calcutta Botanical Gardens in the mid nineteenth century. According to P. Cox in the Larger Species of Rhododendrons, the Tibetans sometimes eat the flowers. The nectar from *R. thomsonii* forms non-poisonous honey. It is hardy locally, but may suffer damage in our coldest winters.

Norma Senn



is for "Tiffany"

"Anna Baldseifen" x *R. keiskei*

R 1972 Baldseifen, 2.5 ft., -15 F, M, 3/3

A dwarf plant with clean, small leaves. The flowers are a lovely pink, shading apricot and yellow in the throat. Petals are reflexed. The flowers are star-shaped, and arranged close to the stem in thick clusters - an unusually beautiful appearance.

The plant is hardy and if placed in a sunny spot in the garden, it is very floriferous. A charming plant.

Vern Finley

ROOTSTALK

BY INDUMENTUM

Thanks to all who were taken in by the April Rootstalk column. Those who believed it was true were closer to the mark than those who remembered that the April Rootstalk column is always a satire on something or other. For just after I had written the piece, an article appeared in the Vancouver Sun on Steve Whysall's page about native plants. The article was depressingly serious and noted that in some North American municipalities, residents are permitted to grow only native plants in their gardens. This is a splendid example of life imitating art.

It has been a puzzle to me how Surrey Council can have implemented such an absurd tree bylaw. For a government can only govern with the consent of the governed, so collectively we must have all agreed. Part of the problem is that special interest groups promote their causes and the rest of us are apathetic. However, there have been issues that get the people of Surrey up in arms so the tree bylaw must not be one of them. I have developed a theory why the tree bylaw has tacit support and it is this.

The majority of Surrey residents have moved to the City fairly recently and have purchased a large new house on a relatively small lot. The lots would have been pretty much totally cleared at the time of development, otherwise, there would be no room for the large house and wide driveway. So Surrey Man gets his turf and sprinkler system installed, buys yards and yards of plastic edging and plants a few plastic-looking shrubs and flowers to complete the effect. Looking up from his labours he notices that some of the older lots in the neighbourhood have quite a few mature native trees and he correctly deduces that the presence of these trees enhances the value of his property. This is what landscape architects call borrowed landscape. So when one of

these property owners on a large treed lot decides to develop a garden by removing the native trees, Surrey Man has to come up with a strategy to preserve his self interest. Not being a real gardener he lacks the long term vision to realise that the developed garden ten years from now is likely to be more attractive. But what does he care anyway as he is likely to have sold his property and moved on well before then. It is a particularly good deal for him to object to the tree removal because not only does the presence of the trees maintain his property value in the short term but he doesn't even have to concern himself with the actual cost of the maintenance. Picking up and disposing of fallen branches is now quite onerous with the imposition by Surrey Council of a total ban on outdoor burning.

However, objecting to tree cutting on the basis of self interest is unlikely to be politically effective. So Surrey Man resorts to a commonly used device in politics which is the application of a surrogate reason to hide his true purpose. The surrogate reason most commonly used in land use battles is protection of the environment. It is an ideal surrogate, for who can possibly argue against preserving the Holy Tree with its contributions to air quality, flood control, wildlife habitat and even mental health as I read recently. Old rotting native trees, by the way, have much higher "wildlife habitat values" than a pristine *Acer griseum*. So you can see fighting the tree bylaw is likely to be a losing battle when Surrey Man purports to have God on his side to effectively conceal his short-term self interest.